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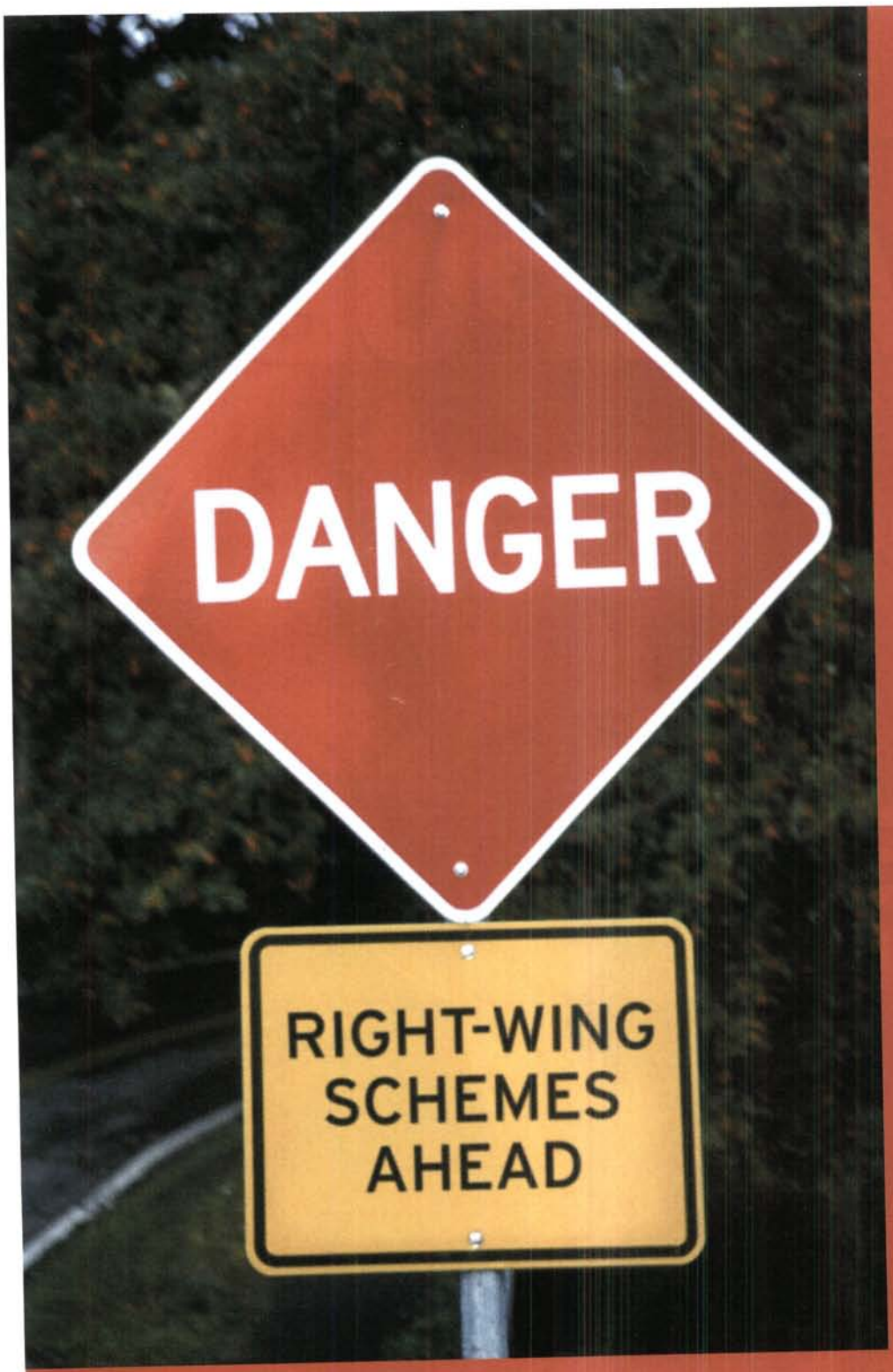

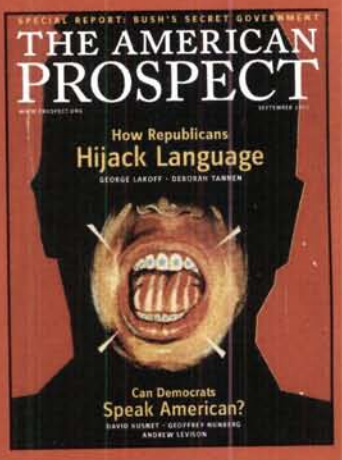

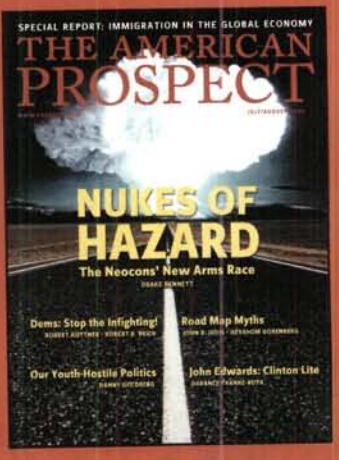

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
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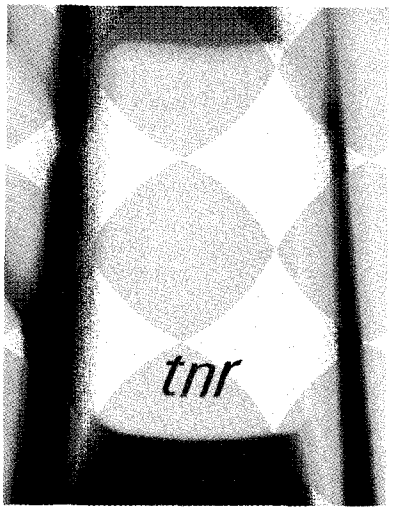

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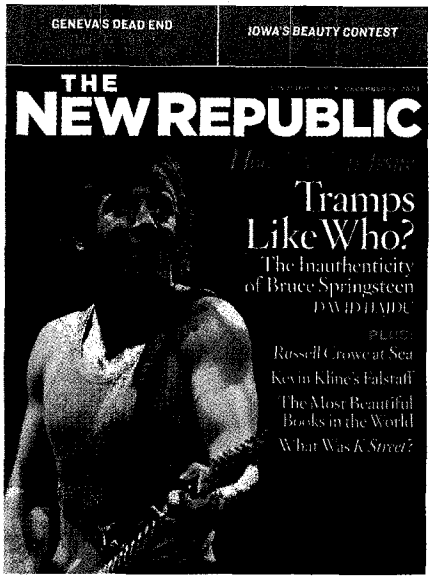
CORRESPONDENCE

NOT IN ACCORDANCE

THE CHORUS OF PROTEST AGAINST the Geneva Accord is truly baffling (Michael B. Oren and Yossi Klein Halevi, "Fantasy," December 15). A group of Israelis and Palestinians, many of whom were involved in the Camp David and Taba negotiations, set out to demonstrate that the basic assumptions underlying those talks might well have produced a permanent-status agreement. To make its point, the Geneva group created an agreement and a ceremony designed to symbolize the possibility that the agreement embodied.

Few could argue that the Geneva Accord is a "fantasy." For some, the agreement is a dream they hope comes true; for others, it is a nightmare. Each side thinks the other is delusional. That's too bad, because the point of Geneva ought to be very simple: that diplomacy can work. The agreement is certainly flawed. Some of the criticisms offered by Oren and Halevi are important and might even be considered constructive. But Oren and Halevi seem to be more interested in lambasting Geneva and its authors, as if the very act of simulating an agreement were a transgression.

What is even more unfortunate is the level to which the authors lower themselves in order to make their point. They assert that the Accord would "grant the Palestinians a state while they wage a terrorist war." Anyone who has read the document knows that it repeatedly condemns terrorism and commits each party to fighting it. Perhaps Oren and Halevi believe that Geneva doesn't go far enough in this regard. Great! They should critique it and suggest an alternative. Instead, they try to impinge the character of Geneva's Israeli architects. Indeed, after asserting that the Accord "pretends that the last three years never happened," they present their bona fides "as terror-sick Israelis and parents of children in national service, . . . [who] overlook Café Hillel, site of Jerusalem's



last suicide bombing." How sad that these two fine Israeli thinkers feel it necessary to suggest that the authors of a simulated peace treaty are insensitive to the pain of terrorism and the horror it wreaks on all Israelis.

The Geneva Accord ought to be welcomed for the opportunity it provides to examine how a group of negotiators deal with the difficult issues that have divided Israelis and Palestinians for too many decades. It ought to be appreciated as an indication that significant Palestinians believe it is important to foster dialogue and diplomacy, rather than armed struggle and terrorism.

As the former Israeli Defense Forces Chief of Staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahak said in his remarks at the Geneva ceremony: "When we reach an actual agreement, I know that nobody will exactly get everything that he wants, neither side will fulfill all of its dreams, each side will feel it gave in. And then we will know that both sides won, that we chose life."

JONATHAN JACOBY
Director, The IPF Institute
Israel Policy Forum
New York, New York

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MICHAEL B. OREN AND YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI REPLY:
As the Yiddish expression goes: Don't spit in my eye and tell me it's raining. If Geneva, as Jonathan Jacoby suggests, were merely one more theoretical plan for solving the Middle East conflict, we would not have bothered dissecting its fatal flaws. Geneva, though, is neither "imaginary" nor a "simulation," but an attempt by Israeli opposition figures to negotiate a separate deal with Palestinian Authority representatives and then lobby the international community to impose that agreement on the Israeli government. In fact, several Geneva signatories were hard at work at Davos this week, selling their European-funded initiative.

Geneva's Israeli authors "impinged" their own character by willfully misrepresenting the Accord to the Israeli public. Though they claimed that it recognizes the right of the Jewish people to a state in the land of Israel and denies the Palestinians the right of return to pre-1967 Israel, the Accord does neither. The authors also denied the fact that the Accord violates every Israeli red line and offers concessions well beyond those made at Camp David and even at Taba, thereby rewarding three years of terrorism.

Jacoby appears to have an almost mystical belief in the power of diplomatic documents and in the willingness of the Palestinians to uphold them. Palestinian leaders have signed a series of agreements committing them to stopping terrorism and incitement, and they fulfilled none of them. Why should any rational Israeli expect Geneva to be different?

Finally, Jacoby accuses us of contrasting our sensitivity to Israel's terror trauma with the supposed insensitivity of Geneva's authors. In fact, we invoked our sensitivity to explain how hard it was for us to reject the allure of Geneva. Jacoby should read our article more carefully than he apparently has the Geneva Accord.

WHO'S THE BOSS?

I WAS RELIEVED THAT DAVID HAJDU'S think-piece on the "inauthenticity" of Bruce Springsteen was not another tired slagging of rich pop stars ("Tramps Like Who?" December 15). My relief proved short-lived. Hajdu's complaint was something even more dubious: that Springsteen's working-class-hero image is phony not because he's rich but because he seldom writes introspectively about himself, only sympathetically about others.

Sorry if I sound like Tom Wolfe banging his social-realism drum, but what's "inauthentic" about that? Is it not a sign of immaturity in young novelists when they can't escape the bounds of their autobiography? Isn't it the job of an artist to create, well, art—the world as he experiences it as well as how he sees others experiencing it? I agree with Hajdu that Springsteen can sometimes be clumsy; *The Ghost of Tom Joad*, his concept album about Mexican migrant workers, was too literally topical to have any lasting impact.

The same gripe might eventually apply to *The Rising*. But these are questions of taste and preference. To insist, as Hajdu seems to, that imagining oneself in others' shoes is somehow less worthy than self-reflection is nonsense. I don't care, frankly, to hear about Springsteen's twilight life on an organic farm in Monmouth County, New Jersey—despite growing up in a town roughly an hour's drive from that redoubt. I couldn't rouse myself to care, either, for his *Tunnel of Love* laments about a failed marriage to a model-actress.

I take Hajdu to be a fan of Springsteen. So am I. I won't be so presumptuous as to speak for all of us, but I have a hunch: The day Bruce Springsteen stops writing about the lives of his fans is the day his fans stop listening to him.

SCOTT GALUPO
The Washington Times
Washington, D.C.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY HAJDU takes Springsteen to task for experimenting with other musical traditions such as the *narcocorrido*. No one would ever think to criticize Miles Davis for tapping into the "rich Latino tradition" in *Sketches of Spain* simply because it was "not Davis's own"; indeed, Paul Simon and David Byrne have made careers of drawing from other cultures.

JERRY STEIN
New York, New York

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"This book should provoke the kind of controversy that advances our understanding of the Constitution."

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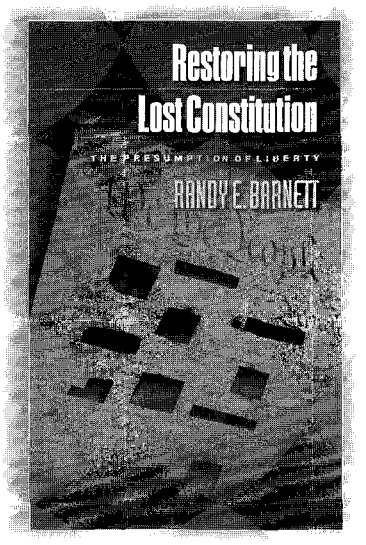

The U.S. Constitution found in textbooks and under glass in Washington is not the one enforced today by the Supreme Court. In *Restoring the Lost Constitution*, Randy Barnett explains how, since the nation's founding, but especially since the 1930s, the courts have been cutting holes in the original Constitution and its amendments to eliminate the parts that protect liberty from the power of government. In a presentation that is clearly argued and remarkably accessible, Barnett proposes adopting a Presumption of Liberty that would put into effect the entire Constitution as originally enacted and amended. A Cato Institute book for Princeton University Press.

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Second Act

TRB FROM WASHINGTON

MIDWAY THROUGH LAST Thursday's Democratic debate in New Hampshire, co-moderator Peter Jennings decided to have a little fun with Al Sharpton. The reverend wants to be treated as a serious presidential candidate—even though he has never held elective office, has visited New Hampshire only four times (twice for debates), and has offered no real policy proposals. So Jennings decided to play along. If "you have the opportunity to nominate someone to be chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, what kind of person would you consider for the job?" the ABC News anchor asked. "You can name someone in particular, if you have someone in mind. And maybe just take a minute or so to give us a little bit about your views on monetary policy."

If anything, Jennings's curveball succeeded too well. Sharpton, confusing monetary policy and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), responded with a broadside against "the IMF and the policies that are emanating there." To make matters worse, Fox's Brit Hume followed up a few minutes later with a question about how President Sharpton would handle Iran. The reverend's answer this time was only slightly more coherent. "I would support the U.N. to try to bring about some kind of stabilized order there," explained Sharpton, although the problem in theocratic Iran is too much order, not too little. Once again, the question's subtext was obvious and even a little ugly: What does Tawana Brawley's ex-spokesman know about the nonracial aspects of U.S. government? Answer: Virtually nothing.

But the answer wasn't always so obvious. A year ago, Sharpton's candidacy seemed more dangerous but less ridiculous. A February 2003 CNN poll put him at 7 percent nationally, more than twice the level of Howard Dean. The reverend got a respectful hearing on NBC's "Meet the Press" in January and a raucous reception at the NARAL Pro-Choice America meeting in February. He modeled his campaign after Jesse Jackson's in 1988—a campaign that was anything but a joke. Jackson won 37 percent of the primary vote in New York, 31 percent in Maine, 27 percent in Vermont, 20 percent in Minnesota, 11 percent in Iowa, and 8 percent in New Hampshire, en route amassing more than one-quarter of all Democratic delegates. His anti-corporate message captivated the very college-educated, left-leaning, white activists who this year flocked to Dean. Indeed, by one estimate, Jackson tied Michael Dukakis among Democrats aged 18–24. No one would have questioned his right to participate in a New Hampshire debate. And, if asked about monetary policy or Iran, Jackson probably would have had something to say.

From the beginning, Sharpton set out to define this year's Democratic race as Jackson defined the one in 1988: As a battle between liberal activists and Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) moderates. "There's going to have to be a showdown between the Democratic Leadership Council and the progressive forces," he told *The Nation*. "I see us as the children of the Rainbow [Coalition] coming back to bring the party back to where it was," he told *The American Prospect*.

As it turned out, for much of 2003 the nomination fight did indeed look like an ideological battle. It's just that Dean utterly eclipsed Sharpton as the spokesman for the "Democratic wing of the Democratic Party." Partly, that's because this year, as opposed to 1988, the liberal-centrist divide was largely about foreign policy, where Sharpton has the least credibility. But, more important, Sharpton hasn't emerged as the leader of an ideological wing of the Democratic Party because, unlike Jackson, *he isn't that ideological*. By 1988, Jackson had become an all-purpose left-wing gadfly, the '80s equivalent of Ralph Nader or Michael Moore. He marched with striking coal-miners, picketed outsourcing corporations, and renegotiated loans for struggling family farmers. And he explicitly disavowed racialism, noting that the poorest Americans were "young, white, and female."

Sharpton, by contrast, has spent his career placing racial (and personal) interests above ideological ones. In New York, his economic agenda was confined to denouncing white- (and Asian-) owned businesses that operated in black neighborhoods. And he specialized in torpedoing white liberals. In 1986, Sharpton supported Republican Senator Al D'Amato for reelection over Democrat Mark Green. In 1992, he refused to endorse Democratic State Attorney General Robert Abrams, helping give D'Amato another six years. In 1994, he refused to support Patrick Moynihan, calling him racially insensitive. And, in 2001, he again refused to endorse Green, helping hand New York's mayoralty to Michael Bloomberg.

So it's hardly surprising that, this year, Sharpton has trained his fire not on DLC-esque candidates like Joe Lieberman or John Edwards but on liberal standard-bearer Howard Dean. On October 28, Sharpton said Dean's support for the death penalty and opposition to gun control "amounts to an anti-black agenda." Later, at Iowa's "black-brown" debate, he flayed Dean for presiding over an all-white Cabinet in Vermont. Meanwhile, Sharpton has yet to offer a plan to provide health care for the uninsured.

Ultimately, then, Sharpton has failed to duplicate Jackson's 1988 accomplishment, because, for all their superficial similarities, the two men have different missions. Jackson amassed power by using his African American base as the foundation of a broader left-liberal coalition. Sharpton amasses power by threatening to withhold that base *from* a larger left-liberal coalition. This week, *The New York Times* reported that Republican operative, and Bush supporter, Roger Stone has emerged as one of Sharpton's key advisers. It is entirely possible that, later this year, the reverend will commence a very public, very anguished dialogue with himself about whether to endorse the Democratic nominee. Democrats don't seem overly worried about that right now, perhaps because they remember 1988, when Jackson endorsed Dukakis and even campaigned for him across the country. But the analogy, while comforting, is false. Jackson might not have always believed the right things, but at least he believed in things other than himself. **PETER BEINART**

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Panic Room

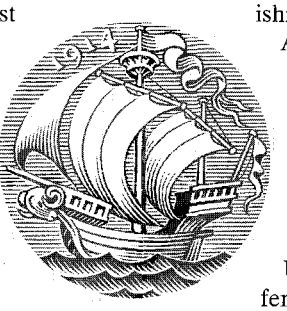
AMERICA'S ROOM TO maneuver in Iraq seems to be narrowing by the day. In the latest unraveling of expectations, the Bush team's plans for postwar Iraq have been hijacked by a cleric who hasn't left his house in six years. Emissaries of Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani made clear last week that Iraq's senior Shia cleric has no use for the phased transition to Iraqi self-rule envisioned by the Bush administration, preferring direct elections instead.

And, in Washington, which had planned for caucuses controlled by the Coalition Provisional Authority and the Iraqi Governing Council, the spectacle of thousands of angry Shia in the streets has concentrated the mind. President Bush last week summoned L. Paul Bremer back to the United States, administration officials who once dreamed of marginalizing the United Nations implored Kofi Annan to rescue them, and the Bush team let it be known that nearly every facet of its transition plan was open to negotiation.

Some of the White House's pragmatic instincts are correct. The priority in Iraq should be creating an electoral system—whatever form it takes—that enjoys legitimacy with most Iraqis while also protecting minority rights. Unfortunately, because it doesn't want Iraq's elections to interfere with America's elections, the White House refuses to renegotiate the one part of the transition plan—the June deadline for transferring sovereignty—that it must in order to provide Iraq with a democratic future.

For the U.S. enterprise in Iraq, Sistani's challenge may turn out to be the gravest. The cleric's words amount to law for many Shia, who comprise 60 percent of the country's population. He wishes to make Iraq an Islamic state—not a theocracy in the image of neighboring Iran, but not a liberal democracy, either. Some admiring American officials have divined "moderation" in his past and present proclamations. And it is true that Sistani has admonished his supporters to refrain from further demonstrations, at least for the time being. It is also true that his lieutenants claim that, if the United Nations declares elections unfeasible in the short term, he will abide by their verdict. But the fact is, the United States knows little about this reclusive cleric.

We do know, however, that he has a valid complaint. Sistani's demand for direct elections is at least partly rooted in the justifiable fear that Iraq's long-disenfranchised Shia will be disenfranchised yet again, this time at the hands of the United States. Indeed, administration officials concede that one of the purposes of their original transition plan was to preserve the influence of Washington's handpicked Iraqi politicians. So the White House may have to consider making concessions. After all, the argument over elections versus caucuses is not an argument over first principles. Washington shouldn't insist on a particular form of voting but rather that Iraqis gain a constitution that contains a bill of rights, the outlines of a federal governing structure, mechanisms to ensure Iraq's first election is not its last, and protections for minorities. Local referenda rather than caucuses, extended deadlines, the U.N.'s assessment on the feasibility of elections now—all these measures could bridge the gap between Sistani and Washington. Thwarting the principle of consent in the face of an aggrieved majority, however, carries great risks.



But considering direct elections does not mean holding elections by June. Bremer himself has said that it would be impossible to organize elections by then, and other administration officials have admitted that even holding caucuses may be unfeasible. Still, the White House is unwilling to budge from its June fetish. Some administration officials have long believed, against all evidence, that Iraq could quickly govern itself, and the administration's hopelessly rosy prewar planning stemmed partly from this fiction. Thus the insufficient numbers of troops left behind in Iraq, America's inability to quash violence in the Sunni triangle, and, consequently, the diminishment of U.S. authority.

All these things have cleared the way for the challenge from the ayatollah.

Now, the imperatives of 2004 dovetail with the Bush team's long-held beliefs: The United States must transfer sovereignty to Iraqis well before November's presidential elections. As for Sistani, he has said that, if the United Nations decides elections cannot be held as early as June, he would wait. We should, too. Ignoring the will of a restive majority could lead to the kind of civil strife that would make last week's Baghdad demonstrations look like a peace march. ■

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NOTEBOOK

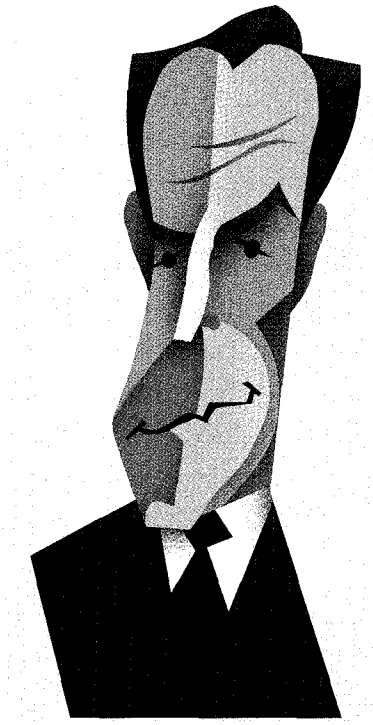
THE EDUCATION OF PETER JENNINGS . . . THE SECOND COMING OF ROY MOORE

ACADEMIC QUESTION

PETER JENNINGS HAS LONG HAD A grating tendency to demonstrate his intellectualism, often using his anchor's desk as a platform to showcase his supposed erudition. And at no time during the presidential primaries has that pompous proclivity been on clearer display than during Jennings's questioning of the candidates at the January 22 New Hampshire debate.

Of John Edwards, ABC's "World News Tonight" host asked, "[C]ould you take a minute to tell us what you know about the practice of Islam that would reassure Muslims throughout the world who will be listening to you that President Edwards understands their religion and how you might use that knowledge to avoid a confrontation, which . . . might indeed end up sending sons and daughters from New Hampshire to war?" However important an appreciation of Islam will be to U.S. foreign policy in the coming years, the question would seem to have little bearing on Edwards's performance in office. After all, it's unlikely that having a Methodist American president explain the meaning of Mohammed's teachings to Muslim fundamentalists would dilute their hatred for the United States, nor, conversely, would his ignorance get the sons and daughters of New Hampshire killed, as Jennings suggested. But, when Edwards, in the course of his understandably rambling answer, conceded, "I would never claim to be an expert on Islam. I am not," Jennings twisted the knife with his follow-up: "Do you think that we suffer and will suffer at the policy level because we do not know enough about the practice of Islam?"

Having dispatched the North Carolina senator, Jennings set his sights on Al Sharpton, asking him what kind of person a President Sharpton would nominate to chair the Federal Reserve Board and then requesting that Sharpton "maybe just take a minute or so to give us a little bit about your views on monetary policy." The first part of Jennings's question was fair, and Sharpton flubbed it, going off on a tangent about the International Monetary Fund before being reminded by Jennings that his question had been about the Fed. But the second part of Jennings's question, about Sharpton's views on monetary policy, was beside the point: After all, the last time we checked, the president doesn't set monetary policy.



Peter Jennings

Finally, Jennings got in a dig at Wesley Clark, asking the general why he did not object when filmmaker Michael Moore, in the course of endorsing Clark at a rally in New Hampshire, accused President Bush of being a "deserter," which was, Jennings lectured, "a reckless charge not supported by the facts." But the charge isn't exactly reckless. Bush, as *The Boston Globe* has established—and as we note in "AWOL," on page 10—apparently did not show up for a year of his service in the Texas Air National Guard in 1972–1973. And, while Bush's absence probably doesn't earn him the label of "deserter"—which is traditionally applied to someone who flees his post during combat—his spotty attendance would seem to merit Bush a designation of "AWOL." Perhaps Jennings should be a little less reckless himself—it's hard to look erudite while showcasing your own ignorance.

LOVE IN THE TIME OF INTIFADA

IDEOLOGY IS NOTORIOUSLY INCAPABLE of describing reality truthfully, which is why its career is regularly marked by disappointment; but sometimes the description is so false that it seems not so much a mistake as a willful misrepresentation based on a dogma or a desire. The recent history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has provided a textbook lesson in the confounding of progressivism by the particulars of history. How, after all, can the Palestinians, so hallowed on the left, allow their noble anti-Zionist cause, their magnificent road to statehood, to be advanced by such means as suicide bombing—worse, by suicide bombing animated by the supremely regressive spirit of militant Islam? This is not exactly what Fanon had in mind. But it gets worse. Consider the recent horror of Reem Salah Al Reyashi, the 22-year-old mother of two small children, who blew herself and four Israelis to bits at a border crossing in Gaza on January 14. Is this how Palestinian women are supposed to discover their historical agency? (Hamas is turning increasingly to terrorist women because terrorist men are more easily spotted by the Israeli police.) Where is the wrath of the feminists? Then the Israeli paper *Yediot Aharonot* reported that this twisted woman's action had nothing whatsoever to do with historical agency: She was forced to do the deed as penance for an extramarital affair. Strictly speaking, those four Israelis died not in a suicide bombing but in

DAVID COWLES

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an honor killing. The details are breathtaking. The woman's lover strapped the bomb around her waist, and the woman's husband drove her to the scene. Her family did not set up the customary tent of mourning for her, since her religious and political glory was born of sexual and familial disgrace. Her husband subsequently denied the story of his wife's adultery, praising her as "an honorable woman who sacrificed her life for the sake of Islam and Palestine." Oh, and as a good mother. Who are these "activists" for whom adultery is more heinous than murder? Is such a mentality not as repulsive, not as much of an obstacle to peace, as an "outpost" on a hill near Nablus? But the progressives of the day, the peace-processors and the road-mappers, the diabolizers of Israel (or—this is the more measured view—of Ariel Sharon), have somehow managed to stifle their disgust.

POLITICAL HEAVY

VERNON ROBINSON HAD A PROBlem. A black Republican who sits on the city council in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Robinson is running for an open seat in the United States House of Representatives. And, with the campaign slogan, "Jesse Helms is back. And, this time, he's black!" Robinson's candidacy has received a fair amount of attention, garnering endorsements from such conservative luminaries as Bob Barr, Jack Kemp, and Alan Keyes. But, in a crowded, seven-candidate GOP primary, those endorsements only go so far, especially when the man Robinson is battling for the title of most conservative Christian in the race, a Republican businessman named Nathan Tabor, has received endorsements from Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell; and Tabor has Roy Moore, the former Alabama Supreme Court chief justice who became the darling of the Christian Right when he erected a two-and-a-half-ton marble monument of the Ten Commandments in the court building's rotunda, campaigning for him.

But Robinson had an ingenious solution. Taking a page from Moore's playbook, he shelled out $2,000 and commissioned his own Ten Commandments monument—this one made of granite and weighing one ton. And, last week, on Martin Luther King Day, Robinson placed the monument—which, in addition to the Ten Commandments, bore the handy label, A PROJECT OF COUNCILMAN VERNON L. ROBINSON—on a walkway in front of the deserted Winston-Salem City Hall. What happened next was entirely predictable: The Winston-Salem city manager, Bill Stuart, had the monument removed; the national press—including NBC's "Today," National Public Radio, and *The New York Times*—did stories on the controversy; and Robinson took a step toward becoming a Christian-conservative folk hero. "THE TEN COMMANDMENTS DEBATE MOVES FROM ALABAMA TO NORTH CAROLINA," reads the headline at the top of the Robinson campaign's website. The only good news came when Stuart decided he would not ask Robinson to reimburse the city the $530 it took to remove the monument. "I concluded I wasn't going to press the case for the money and instead just let it die," he said. Stuart obviously hasn't visited Alabama. ■

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Was Michael Moore right?

AWOL

BY SPENCER ACKERMAN

RETIRED GENERAL Wesley Clark has faced many enemies in his career, from the Viet Cong to Slobodan Milosevic. At last week's Democratic debate in New Hampshire, however, Clark was ambushed by an unexpected foe. ABC News anchor Peter Jennings took the general to task for staying silent while liberal filmmaker—and Clark supporter—Michael Moore labeled President Bush a "deserter" at a campaign rally. "That's a reckless charge not supported by the facts," Jennings admonished Clark, all but demanding that he exhibit "a better example of ethical behavior" by repudiating the claim. An off-guard Clark responded by blathering about Moore's right to free speech, prompting an unsatisfied press corps to stay on the story until Clark finally declared the next day, "I can't agree with Michael Moore."

But, in fact, Moore's charge isn't beyond the pale at all. It's true that Bush isn't a deserter in the narrow sense: He never abandoned his post under attack. But he came as close as one could to deserting the Texas Air National Guard. As *The Boston Globe* meticulously documented in 2000, Bush's Guard records indicate that he failed to perform a year of service from 1972 to 1973. Despite the *Globe*'s investigative work and a string of non-denial denials from the Bush campaign during the 2000 election, the press largely gave Bush a pass on his military service—a crucial test of character for Bill Clinton eight years earlier. If either Clark or John Kerry—both highly decorated Vietnam vets—won the Democratic nomination, he might be tempted to raise Bush's military service as a character issue in the general election. What Jennings taught Clark last week is that the media probably won't tolerate it.

THEN BUSH GRADUATED from Yale in 1968—just months after the Tet Offensive—he found a coveted spot in the Texas Air National Guard waiting for him. A Bush clan ally, Texas House Speaker Ben Barnes, had phoned state Guard officials to inquire about a place for George W. Despite a dismal score on his pilot aptitude test, Bush received a six-year stint in the Texas Air National Guard, which would require him to undergo flight training and report for periodic drills through 1974, according to the *Globe*. Of course, Bush was hardly unique in seeking alternatives to serving in Vietnam; many members of his social class—with notable exceptions, such as Kerry and Al Gore—did the same. Where Bush *did* distinguish himself was in failing to perform even the minimal service that he had signed up for.

Less than two years after finishing his initial pilot's training, Bush was offered a job in Alabama with the 1972 Senate campaign of former U.S. Postmaster General Winton Blount. Bush asked Guard officials in May of that year if he could fulfill his continuing duty obligations by serving with a mail squadron based in Montgomery, but they turned him down, noting the unit's lax drilling schedule. Bush left Texas anyway—with his Guard responsibilities unresolved—joining the campaign in Alabama that month. In August, he failed to take his annual flight physical, which meant losing his flight status. A month later, he requested and received permission to perform his fall Guard duty with the 187th Tactical Recon Group in Montgomery before returning to Houston's Ellington Air Force Base after the election. But he apparently never showed up: The *Globe* investigation found that Ellington had no record of Bush performing service in Alabama. In fact, the 187th's commander—*Bush*'s commander—William Turnipseed told the paper, "Had he reported in, I would have had some recall, and I do not. I had been in Texas, done my flight training there. If we had had a first lieutenant from Texas, I would have remembered." His memory was corroborated by Bush's discharge papers, which showed neither any service in Alabama nor any training by Lieutenant Bush at all after May 1972.

Bush was supposed to return to Houston after Blount's losing race. But, by May 1973, his commanding officers in Texas noticed that they could not write his annual performance evaluation for the simple reason that Bush wasn't there. "Lt. Bush has not been observed at this unit during the period of this report"—May 1, 1972, to April 30, 1973—his evaluation reads. This was a serious charge: Delinquent guardsmen could be inducted into the Army. Just after the report was issued, Bush received two "special orders" commanding him to return for nine days of active duty in May, and he subsequently logged 36 days of duty by July 1973. Explained the Texas Air Guard's then–personnel director, Albert Lloyd Jr., "I'll bet someone called him up and said, 'George, you're in a pickle. Get your ass down here and perform some duty.' " Bush officially ended his Guard career on October 1, 1973, eight months shy of his six-year obligation.

The Bush campaign's reaction to the *Globe* story was swift. Bush told reporters the day the story broke that he "did the duty necessary" to merit his honorable discharge, which elided the real question of whether he had in fact consistently shown up for duty. He painted Turnipseed's comments as an instance of he-said, he-said: "I read the comments from the guy who said he doesn't remember me being [in Alabama], but I remember being there." (Never mind that Bush's discharge papers affirm Turnipseed's story.) To explain away Bush's missed 1972 physical, the campaign resorted to inanities, such as arguing that Bush's doctor was in Houston at the time—even though flight physicals have to be performed by Air Force physicians. And, as the *Globe* noted in October 2000, Bush refused interviews with the paper concerning his military service.

Which wasn't surprising, because the campaign had a lot

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to protect: Not only was character the centerpiece of Bush's bid for the White House, but his handlers had portrayed him as a rough-hewn flyboy. The image was, of course, illusory, but Bush slipped easily into the role. In his 1999 campaign autobiography, Bush wrote that, at Yale, he and his friends "discussed Vietnam, but we were more concerned with the decision each of us had to make: military service or not. I knew I would serve"—as if whether he served in the jungles of Vietnam or under the blue skies of Texas were an insignificant detail. But the Bush campaign continued to hype his military experience, and, until the eve of the 2000 election, its website peddled the demonstrably false claim that Bush had served in the Guard from 1968 to 1973.

ALTHOUGH THE *Globe* followed the story tenaciously throughout the election season, its elite media cousins kept their distance. When *The New York Times* turned to Bush's military record in one of its treacly campaign profiles, the paper of record dubbed his absence a "hiatus" and, in an inattentive understatement, called it one of the "gray areas" of the candidate's "youthful years." The *Times* cited Turnipseed's recollection as the center of the accusation—not Bush's discharge papers, nor his 1973 evaluation report. As a result, the paper echoed the campaign spin that this was one man's word against another's, with Turnipseed taking "a tiny step back" by saying, "I don't think he did, but I wouldn't stake my life on it," while Bush bluntly stated, "I was there." (That October, Turnipseed said, "I'm dead certain [Bush] didn't show up.") As presidential historian Richard Shenkman observed at the time, *The Boston Globe* doesn't set media perceptions: "When it gets on the front page of *The New York Times*, then it'll be an issue." But the *Times* painted the issue as indeterminate, and stories in other publications essentially fell into the same mold.

Why didn't the press seize on Bush's spotty military record? For one thing, the story required proving a negative: that Bush was not somewhere he was supposed to be. Even though there was copious and consistent documentation, backed by eyewitness memory, that Bush shirked his Guard duties from May 1972 until May 1973, there was no evidence that could demonstrate affirmatively he was *elsewhere*. As a result, the he-said, he-said storyline took hold. In addition, military service was not an easy subject for Gore to raise: Although he volunteered to serve in Vietnam, he received an assignment as an Army reporter, which did not give him the opportunity for battlefield heroics. Given that the media's Bush-fueled stereotype of Gore was that he would say or do anything to be elected, Gore had to be cautious about how he used his record in the campaign. It was a justified fear. CNN ran a piece shortly before the Democratic convention on how an old campaign brochure showing Gore carrying an M-16 "was a bit misleading, ... [leaving] the impression, his critics said, that he was an infantryman."

In the final days of the campaign, Gore's surrogates revived the charge that Bush had wriggled out of his duty. At a rally a few days before the election, one supporter—a Vietnam veteran—mocked Bush's pledge to restore honor and dignity to the White House, asking, "How is it that someone who's supposedly serving on active duty, having supposedly taken that oath, can miss a whole year of service without explaining where it went?" It may be that Bush will have to answer this question in the coming months—since the supporter's name was John Kerry. But, if last week's debate is any indication, Bush will find a press corps eager to answer it for him. ■

Dubai Dispatch

City on a Hill

BY AFSHIN MOLAVI

AS THE WORLD'S bankers gathered last September in the Persian Gulf city of Dubai, part of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), for the annual International Monetary Fund/World Bank meetings, talk inevitably turned to the economic stagnation of the Arab world. The statistics are grim: The 280 million people of the 22 Arab countries have a combined gross domestic product (GDP) less than that of 40 million Spaniards, some 25 percent of Arabs live below the poverty line, and some 20 million are out of work. The region's economic growth—an insipid 0.5 percent over the past 30 years—is among the lowest in the world.

But the irony of this IMF/World Bank hand-wringing was that it was taking place in Dubai, a city that has transformed itself from a modest commercial entrepôt to the budding Singapore of the Middle East. Dubai does everything the Arab world doesn't—and it could serve as a lesson to its larger neighbors. It promotes secure, attractive environments for foreign investment. It eliminates the red tape that slows business. It creates incentives for young entrepreneurs—including women. It invests in infrastructure. And it creates a tourism industry that attracts millions of travelers, some of whom like the country so much they consider locating businesses here.

DUBAI'S BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY seems simple: Build it, and they will come. The "it" is a business-friendly environment and world-class tourist attractions. And, while other Arab states talk, Dubai acts. In the past two decades, Dubai has slashed corporate taxes and cut tariffs on most items, creating a rep-

Afshin Molavi is the author of PERSIAN PILGRIMAGES: JOURNEYS ACROSS IRAN.

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utation as a place to do business. At the same time, the country has improved its world-class port; upgraded its airport; increased the number of facilities for Web access, making it the most wired city in the region; and built many new structures designed to house financial firms. In fact, the new Dubai International Financial Center is expected to give the regional banking hub, Bahrain, a run for its money. Dubai also has built a series of high-profile tourist spots, including the Burj Al Arab, a seven-star hotel with a Disneyland-meets-Arabian-kitsch interior, an array of upscale beach resorts, and dozens of glitzy shopping malls.

Sheik Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the crown prince of Dubai, has been the guiding force behind the country's development. A hyper-ambitious visionary with a Jack Welchian disdain for inefficiency, he is often dubbed the CEO of Dubai, Inc. Unlike many other Arab nations, where the rulers prioritize political order over economic gain, Sheik Mohammad charts Dubai's path with an eye to how changes will impact the economy and relies on a team of Western-educated economic advisers, who understand both the bazaar *and* the NASDAQ.

Clearly, Dubai is doing something right. Since 1995, the city's economy has grown by 71 percent and has emerged as a regional hub for tourism, transport, trade, technology, health care, media, and real estate. The British property consultants Jones Lang Lasalle recently named Dubai, along with Dublin and Las Vegas, one of the three most successful cities of the '90s, as measured by economic growth and real estate activity. Most important, the unemployment rate for Dubai citizens now hovers below 5 percent, less than half the rate of large Arab nations like Egypt, while the UAE's GDP per capita is roughly $22,000, more than five times the GDP of Egypt. Dubai attracts almost five million visitors per year, besting Egypt and even India.

To be sure, Dubai benefits from its small population, roughly two million; large numbers of expatriate laborers; and its oil reserves, though Dubai has diversified away from oil. So one might ask: What lessons can larger, less resource-rich countries like Egypt or Jordan learn from Dubai?

Give the private sector access to capital, for starters. The first rule of wealth-creation is relatively equal access to capital, yet, throughout the Arab world, entrepreneurs are stifled by tight credit markets and weak lending structures. Of the annual Top 100 Arab banks listed by *The Banker* magazine, 17—the highest number—are located in the UAE. And, unlike their counterparts elsewhere in the Arab world, UAE banks lend relatively equally to private companies and state-owned businesses. In Egypt, by comparison, half of the country's banking sector is run by plodding, state-owned entities that only lend to government-linked firms. Syria, meanwhile, only recently permitted private banks to operate; its state banks are notoriously inefficient and corrupt. Even in Lebanon, a traditional banking center, credit is tight and limited to well-connected elites. As a result, though non-oil-rich Arab states like Egypt possess considerable capital—Egypt has some of the largest banks in the region—most of that money is useless, because it is not invested in productive local companies.

It's not just about capital, however. Commercial lenders need attractive investment opportunities, and Dubai's liberal economic climate affords them. Indeed, the UAE has become an increasingly popular place for other Arab commercial banks to invest, according to the Kuwait-based Inter-Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation. What's more, unlike elites in countries like Saudi Arabia, who keep their money offshore, the big merchant families of Dubai reinvest their money locally. "We have more investment opportunities here, so a lot of our money stays here," says Sultan bin Sulayem, the head of one of Dubai's free-trade zones.

Arab economies also need strong small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the engine of economic development in the industrialized West. And Dubai's government spends a substantial amount of time and money nurturing local ones. The Dubai-based Mohammad bin Rashid Establishment for Young Business Leaders offers consultancy and incubator services to SMEs: A young business leader will be given a small loan, legal and tax advice, assistance in writing a business plan, and access to local business leaders. By contrast, Saudi Arabia simply offers young entrepreneurs a loan, without the other services, while other Arab states don't have significant SME-promotion programs at all.

And Dubai promotes its attractions: It has aggressively marketed its improvements through a series of advertisements that run in global financial media, showing executives Dubai's strengths. The city also promotes the UAE's geography—its location as a crossroads that can serve East Africa and the Indian subcontinent. In fact, I once met a South African software marketer who covers 77 countries from his UAE base. Few other Arab states have any sort of organized campaign targeted at the international business community.

But, perhaps most important, Dubai doesn't fear free markets. While Syria and Egypt protect state enterprises, earning low ratings in the Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom, Dubai has opened its economy, but it also believes that government must create the foundations for a well-regulated market. Jeffrey Sampler, a London Business School professor and co-author of a new book on Dubai, says the city's model lies somewhere between Singapore and Silicon Valley. "Singapore was very much top-down, government-directed, while Silicon Valley was bottom-up, individual-initiative driven," says Sampler. "Dubai does both. The government spends heavily on infrastructure and large projects, then gradually steps away to allow the free-market and individual initiative to take over."

Dubai's critics—often leftist Arab intellectuals—point out that the city-state's glassy skyscrapers, Western-style shopping malls, and glitzy hotels have ruined its authentic Arab character. One wonders if the critics prefer, say, Yemen, which oozes "authenticity" and is an economic basket case. In any event, questions of authenticity are debated by intellectuals, not by the Arab working classes, many of whom jump at the chance to move to Dubai. As one Dubai-

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based Egyptian engineer told me, "Here in Dubai, I feel that my children have more opportunities. In Egypt, the rulers simply plunder and don't give back. In Dubai, the rulers create opportunities for everyone. Arab leaders all talk about dignity, but it's very hard to maintain dignity when you don't have enough money to support your family." Arab leaders would do well to listen to him. ■

Kerry's odd book on terrorism.

Book Mark

BY MICHAEL CROWLEY

As a presidential candidate, John Kerry has become something of a lunch-pail populist. He rails against corporate "special interests," demands expanded health care coverage, and defends middle-class tax cuts. Thanks in part to his murky position on the Iraq war, Kerry favors the safe harbor of domestic issues to the rough shoals of national security and foreign affairs.

That's ironic. Because Kerry—shaped as he is by Vietnam—has always been, at heart, a foreign policy man. From the day he arrived in Washington, Kerry aimed to be a senator-statesman. He quickly landed spots on the Select Intelligence and Foreign Relations Committees, traveled abroad extensively, and spent hundreds of hours studying esoteric foreign troubles. In a way, all of this speaks well of a man so often accused of pandering. Until 2001, after all, few people cared about such hot foreign affairs topics as NATO expansion. As *The Boston Globe* magazine noted in 1996, "Kerry has devoted much of his career to foreign-policy issues ... that rarely influence voters."

And yet, as his Iraq agonies have shown, Kerry's precise views about the world remain cloudy. But one trove of clues may be found in *The New War*, a book he published to little notice in 1997. Like Al Gore's *Earth in the Balance*, Kerry's book is a wide-ranging, often pedantic tour of impending global catastrophe (complete with grandiose literary references to Yeats, Thoreau, and Shelley). Ordinarily, this unremarkable, out-of-print tome would be quickly forgotten. But Kerry and his supporters are now citing it as evidence of the senator's prescient vision of the coming war on terrorism. When asked on Fox News last weekend about his anti-terrorism record, Kerry quickly invoked *The New War*: "[I]n that book, ... I wrote about how we needed to strengthen our ability to be able to fight international criminal crime, including terror. ... I said, four years before New York, it'll take one megaterrorist event in one of our cities to change life as we know it in America. I think we deserve a president who does see ahead."

Kerry must be assuming no one will go back and actually read his manifesto, because his description of it is awfully selective. Yes, Kerry briefly considered the possibility of a terrorist catastrophe on American soil. But *The New War* was almost entirely focused on the threat of global crime—not terrorism. If the future Kerry predicted really had arrived, we'd currently be locked in a vicious cyberwar with CD-pirating Japanese *yakuza*, Chinese kidney-traders, and Italian mobsters—not hunting Islamic fundamentalists potentially armed with weapons of mass destruction.

It is, of course, true that almost no one predicted a September 11–like attack, and few correctly identified Islamic terrorists as the chief post-cold-war security threat to the United States. But the ways in which *The New War* missed the mark are nevertheless revealing. They show the extent to which Kerry was influenced by the criminal investigations of his early Senate career, his preference for viewing post-cold-war security more as a matter for law enforcement than the military, and his tendency to describe problems ad nauseam without offering a clear and bold course of action.

Profiles of Kerry tend to skip over the freelance investigations he conducted into drug-running and money-laundering in Central America in the 1980s. But they were some of the most interesting and important work of his Senate career. Soon after coming to Washington in 1985, Kerry started to get tips about shady arms-dealers tied to Nicaragua's Reagan-backed Contra rebels. Kerry opened a probe that led him to Oliver North's covert operations and ultimately revealed that the CIA had turned a blind eye to drug-trafficking in the region—reinforcing his sense, acquired in Vietnam, that the U.S. foreign policy establishment was often corrupt. ("Our covert agencies have converted themselves to channels for drugs," Kerry raged in 1987.) Kerry's probing led him down other paths as well: first to the major drug-trafficking operations of Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega and then to money-laundering at the now-infamous Bank of Credit and Commerce International. It was these inquiries that formed the basis of *The New War*, which Kerry called "an attempt to bring together that decade of work into an understandable whole."

Despite Kerry's current spin that his book was a premonition of September 11–style terrorism, *The New War* reveals a man concerned mainly about crime, not warfare. Kerry even argues that "[t]he damage done by international crime is rarely as specific and dramatic as that of a terrorist attack, but in fact it is greater." Hence, the book's ominous central theme: that "powerful new criminal enterprises threaten the stability of whole nations and challenge our standards of civilization." For just under 200 pages, Kerry describes how chaos in post-Soviet Russia, market expansion in China, drug wars in Central America, and other forces were breeding new super-criminal groups—the most fearsome being the Italian and Russian mafias, the mob-like *yakuza*, the Columbian drug cartels, and the felonious Chinese "triads."

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These groups, Kerry wrote, were growing ever-more skilled at buying off government leaders, smuggling drugs, running arms, and committing high-tech fraud and theft.

Unlike some conservatives at the time, who sought to pump up China as a new cold-war-style rival, Kerry didn't single out other nations as rising foes. He astutely realized that any "new war" would likely be waged by nonstate actors unconstrained by international borders. Yet he failed to acknowledge even the possibility that those threats could be military. That view showed in the positions Kerry took in the mid-'90s, questioning the size of America's defense and intelligence budgets—positions that may also stem from his innate suspicion of the covert military and CIA operatives best-suited to fight terrorists (the sort of people Kerry exposed in his Central American investigations and who committed some heinous acts in Vietnam).

Kerry probably kicks himself for it today, but in 1997 he apparently didn't have much to say about Islamic fundamentalism. The name Osama bin Laden does not appear in *The New War*, even though, by the time Kerry wrote his book, bin Laden had become a notorious figure (as evidenced by an August 1996 *New York Times* front-pager identifying bin Laden as a frightening anti-American terrorist with ties to the 1993 World Trade Center bombing). To be sure, few people were paying as much attention to bin Laden in the '90s as they should have been. And other experts were warning at the time that, as Kerry quotes former CIA director James Woolsey saying, "international organized crime ... [has] become a matter of national security."

BUT, RATHER THAN write off his bad predictions, Kerry now exaggerates his book's foresight. On Fox News, he boasted of having dedicated a chapter to "The Globalization of Terror" and of predicting that "one mega-terrorist event in any of the great cities of the world [will] change the world in a single day." Indeed, he did. Kerry also, to his credit, accurately identified the danger posed by "loose nukes" in the former Soviet Union and all but predicted that "the Big One"—a terrorist nuke in a major city—is inevitable.

But, after issuing such dire warnings, *The New War* never offers anything like a proportional response. Kerry offers plenty of lofty talk about sacrifice and hardship—"The nations of the earth that stand for the rule of civilized law must be willing to make sacrifices if that law is to endure"—but his prescriptions tend to be bromides for international cooperation, like his call for "an entirely new, multilateral code of behavior" consisting of "nothing less than a full and deliberate commitment by every legitimate government to making the rule of civilized law the dominant force on the planet." Other ideas are either vague or small-bore: investments in new law enforcement technologies, closer regulation of international finance, the addition of 1,000 FBI agents overseas, and a new "global law enforcement" agreement that would allow countries to better cooperate.

What's missing are substantive specifics. There is no call for more funding for global nonproliferation initiatives, such as the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program, begun in 1991 and aimed at securing the loose nukes that worried him, or for cracking down on proliferator governments. Kerry has little to say about the role of U.S. intelligence agencies. Nor does he once consider whether "the new war" might require some new role for the U.S. military. Perhaps worst of all is the odd note on which he closes—a call for repairing America's domestic health through after-school programs, health care for all, and early-childhood intervention. Those programs, Kerry writes, "will enable us to make peace in our own country and contribute to it elsewhere." After reading that Manhattan is likely to be nuked someday, a reader can be forgiven for expecting more.

It's unfair to castigate Kerry for not predicting the future. But it's not unfair to look at his past work for clues into his present worldview, particularly given how mushy it has seemed over the past couple of years. And you can bet that, should Kerry be the Democratic nominee this fall, the Bush team will pummel him for waffling about what role force must play in defending the United States. Indeed, Republicans are already hammering his efforts to cut intelligence spending in the '90s. Unfortunately, *The New War* may give them even more ammunition. ■

Moscow Dispatch

See No Evil

BY MASHA GESSEN

IMAGINE THAT THE king has died. Now imagine that every day on television you see a procession of people chanting, "Long live the king!" Imagine it wasn't always this way: Just a few years ago, if the king's health became shaky, everyone discussed the problem openly. But no more. And now you have to choose. Either you go along and pretend that a dead man is alive—which isn't all that difficult, since everyone is doing it—or you insist, unreasonably, that you see what you see, in which case you will be branded a kook.

Now imagine you've been parachuted into a country like this as a foreign correspondent. Your choices are nearly as stark as those of the natives. If you report on the lies you see every day, you will face an uphill battle. First, your sources will be few, hard to find, and generally considered unreliable. Second, your editors back home may not believe you. So it may seem wiser to report what everyone

Masha Gessen has been U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT*'s Moscow bureau chief and is currently a Nieman Fellow at Harvard.*

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else is reporting and to assuage your discomfort by telling yourself your vision is a function of cultural bias. After all, not every country has the resources to maintain a living king at all times.

Faced with the challenge of covering contemporary Russia, many correspondents for major U.S. newspapers, as well as their editors, have decided to chant, "Long live the king!" The last four years have witnessed the death of Russia's nascent democracy—a major international story. Yet the U.S. media have largely papered over it—just like Russia's newly subjugated media and its newly subservient people.

This winter, U.S. coverage of Russia reached its nadir. On December 7, Russia held a farcical national election in which the local media were biased and campaigning was rigged. The vote ultimately put a fascist party into parliament, removed the few remaining liberals from office, and handed President Vladimir Putin near-total control of the parliament—called the Duma in Russian. *The New York Times* responded with a condescending but positive editorial titled "RUSSIANS INCH TOWARD DEMOCRACY." The *Los Angeles Times* went even further. It interpreted Putin's new dominance of parliament as a chance for the president to "push through additional reforms, including cleaning up the entrenched corruption," though there was little evidence Putin planned to use his power to do so. With the partial exception of *The Washington Post*, U.S. papers generally described the elections as a pro-Putin landslide that somehow would foster democracy, despite the glaring evidence that it will do exactly the opposite.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), a regional grouping, had a different view. "The elections failed to meet many OSCE and Council of Europe commitments for Democratic elections, ... [calling] into question Russia's fundamental willingness to meet European and international standards for democratic elections," it said in a report released just after the poll. But this opinion did not get a lot of play in the United States. The *Los Angeles Times*, in a mammoth news story on the election, managed to downplay the OSCE's conclusion so drastically that you'd think the organization had praised the December 7 vote.

But the OSCE report only confirmed the obvious. With his approval rating never dipping below 60 percent, with a pliant parliament that has green-lighted Kremlin-sponsored legislation for the last four years, and with the media securely under state control, Putin never had any reason to worry that this election or the presidential one, coming up in March, would not go in his favor. Still, the Kremlin decided to meddle heavily in the parliamentary election. A special law passed last June effectively banned the Russian media from covering the campaign, though the Russian Constitutional Court struck down the law halfway through the three-month-long campaign. Then the biggest and best-funded party, the pro-Putin United Russia, refused to participate in televised debates. This left the state TV channels free to stage debates aimed at discrediting the participants. Meanwhile, federal and local officials, most of whom are members of United Russia, used their positions to benefit the party. They strong-armed state institutions and local businesses to compel their employees to join United Russia and campaigned at locations and at times banned by law. All this culminated in an election in which many precincts abandoned curtained voting booths in favor of open voting areas offering minimal privacy, and there was considerable evidence of fraud. The result: United Russia won more than a two-thirds majority in parliament, sufficient to change the constitution—to extend the presidential term, for example.

Worse, the new parliament will not only be obedient to the president but will also increasingly feature ultranationalist, almost fascist rhetoric. United Russia itself is devoid of ideology: It supports whatever Putin wants. But a growing number of extreme nationalists and bigots have flocked to United Russia. One United Russia member, Gennady Raikov, who will head a key parliamentary committee, made a name for himself in the previous parliament by calling for prison sentences for homosexuality. And United Russia looks moderate compared with the other three parties that got enough votes to sit in parliament. A new party called Motherland (*Rodina*) holds over 40 of the 450 seats. One of its leaders, Valentin Varennikov, was an organizer of the failed anti-democratic coup in 1991. The party's platform, among other things, calls for closing the Russian border to all but Belarusians, who are the ethnic group closest to Russians. Its hypernationalistic allies, Vladimir Zhirinovsky's extravagantly misnamed Liberal Democratic Party and the Communists, will make the ultranationalists a powerful force in parliament. Motherland actually was hatched in the Kremlin itself, to siphon votes away from the Communists; this is such common knowledge in Russian political circles that the American ambassador to Russia, Alexander Vershbow, stated it as fact in a recent speech in Washington. So, while United Russia controls a large percentage of parliamentary seats, the Kremlin's handpicked protofascists and plain old fascists have the rest.

WAS THIS DECIMATION of democracy clear only in retrospect, to a select few Russia-watchers? Were journalists from other countries just as confused as the Americans? Not at all. The day before the parliamentary election, Canada's *National Post* ran a story whose headline read, "RACISTS, KILLERS, AND CRIMINALS RUN FOR DUMA." In an editorial published a month before the December election, *The Economist* of London declared that democracy was dying in Russia. It followed the election with a special report that called the new parliament "a democrat's nightmare" and stressed the rising influence of ultranationalists. In the non-English-speaking world, meanwhile, the French media have been more dogged than anyone in covering the nine-year carnage in Chechnya and have covered Kremlin politics in a way that leaves their readership with no illusions about the bloody and often undemocratic nature of Russia's regime.

By contrast, the *Los Angeles Times* mentioned the Moth-

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erland Party in the twenty-second paragraph of its news story and then characterized it as a populist anti-oligarch organization. Another seven paragraphs later, the paper introduced one of the party's leaders, Sergei Glazyev, as "a left-wing economist" and "one of Russia's 10 most popular politicians"—failing to note that Glazyev left the Communist Party to help start Motherland. Considering the staunchly anti-democratic and anti-reform stance of the Communist Party, that detail would have helped in understanding Glazyev. *The New York Times* named the party in the fourteenth paragraph, characterizing it mildly as "a new party created only months before the election" that won support "with nationalistic appeals." *The Boston Globe* incorrectly called Motherland "left-leaning," and the *San Francisco Chronicle* characterized it as "patriotic." Of course, Motherland *is* patriotic—in the same way Mussolini's Black Shirts once were.

The mangling of the Motherland story was only part of a pattern of dangerously naïve reporting that has been developing for five years. In August 1999, Boris Yeltsin appointed Putin—then head of the Federal Security Service, the successor agency to the KGB—as his new prime minister. That September, Russia began a second bloody offensive in Chechnya, where a cease-fire of sorts had been maintained for three years. By December, Russia's airwaves were dominated by xenophobic rhetoric, occasioned by the new war and a parliamentary election. A new party known only for its loyalty to Putin took a chunk of the seats in the Duma in the mid-December election. On New Year's Eve, Yeltsin resigned, effectively handing the presidency to Putin, who would now be acting president until the special election, for which he would be the only candidate with enough time to prepare.

None of this resembled a functioning democracy, but most American journalists opted to report the miracle of a peaceful handover of power. Two days after Yeltsin's resignation, the *Times* ran an article comparing Putin to both Theodore and Franklin D. Roosevelt as a potential visionary leader for Russia. The *Times* quoted precisely two sources—Putin himself and his mentor, the former mayor of St. Petersburg, Anatoly Sobchak, who claimed that Putin was "a convinced supporter of the market economy." Then, the U.S. media spent late 1999 and early 2000 speculating about Putin's persona. Putin himself refused to say anything about his plans for the country or his political views. Instead of reporting that this was a worrisome sign, behavior more befitting a secret agent than a presidential candidate, American journalists looked for clues elsewhere and found them in a think tank Putin had formed to create a plan of liberal economic reforms. The *Times* ran a 1,500-word story on the think tank a week after the presidential election, drawing the conclusion that the new administration would deliver everything from "an overhaul of Russia's cumbersome tax code to a streamlining of its infamous bureaucracies"—with little evidence that Putin actually would do so. Putin began to gain an undeserved reputation in the West as an economic reformer.

The new Russian president began his official tenure in May 2000 and moved to shut down the only non-state-owned national TV network and other media outlets that belonged to the same company. (At the time, I was working at one of the magazines owned by this company.) This would have been a good time for American journalists to inform their readers that Putin was starting to look like a dictator—and stories using such phrasing as "authoritarian tendencies" did appear—but then an American citizen was appointed to run the hijacked TV network, and the U.S. media let the story fizzle. The *Times*, in an editorial, expressed the far-fetched hope that the American would not "do Mr. Putin's bidding," and the subject appeared closed, at least for major U.S. media outlets—even though the American minder was ultimately fired and the station did not become any freer.

Over the next year, Putin got more good U.S. press. He solidified his U.S. reputation as an economic reformer, instituting a flat 13 percent income tax, which was billed in *The Wall Street Journal* as a revolutionary move to simplify the Russian tax system and induce Russians to start paying taxes. What went unreported was that, at the same time, the government increased and complicated the payroll tax. Later, it did away with exemptions from the value-added tax (VAT) and created a hideous new bureaucratic system for paying VAT, which accounts for nearly 40 percent of all collected taxes. In other words, the government slightly simplified the tax system for individuals—the vast majority of whom do not file tax returns anyway, since their taxes are deducted by employers—and significantly complicated them for businesses. Odd actions for an economic reformer.

But, since the Russian economy has continued growing—thanks to high oil prices—there was no real motivation for American journalists to look beyond official Kremlin claims. Putin maintained his reputation as an economic reformer even as he supported measures that severely limited immigration to—and migration within—Russia, exacerbating the problems of Russia's workforce, which is aging and not concentrated in geographical regions where labor is needed. This looked less like economic reform and more like something that might draw the support of ultranationalist Zhirinovsky.

Meanwhile, the U.S. press portrayed Putin as not only an economic but also a judicial liberal. Yet Putin actually dismantled the judicial reforms of the '90s, cutting back the jurisdiction of jury trials and strengthening the role of the too-powerful prosecutor's office, which not only conducts investigations and brings charges but is also vested with the power to "oversee court conduct." The U.S. media, however, lauded these changes as the dawning of the rule of law. The *Journal* concluded that Putin's judicial-reform bills "show a leader determined to overhaul some of Russia's most conservative institutions, and face down its most entrenched vested interests in the process."

And then the story took the ultimate nosedive. After September 11, 2001, Russia became America's strategic partner in the war on terrorism, which has meant that Putin

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can get away with the continuing carnage in Chechnya and just about anything else. It can be embarrassing to read stories from 2001 and 2002, which completely glossed over Russia's problems. Take a *Los Angeles Times* editorial from November 2001 that ended this way: "Never mind for now the remaining political and policy differences between the two countries. ... [T]here's nothing wrong with reveling for a warm moment in the changes today."

WHY DO THE British and Canadian journalists get the Russian story right while the U.S. media can't? For one, the U.S. media has, in recent years, drastically slashed Russia bureaus, while the European press corps has suffered less attrition. Some offices, such as that of *U.S. News and World Report*, my former employer, were simply shuttered; others were cut down drastically. ABC, which used to occupy an entire building in Moscow, is down to one person. Other Moscow bureaus, including those of the *Journal*, *The Boston Globe*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, are increasingly used as bases to send reporters to cover the war on terrorism in Central Asia. Even publications that have maintained bureaus don't seem to care about them. *The New York Times* rotated virtually its entire Moscow bureau last summer, sending in an inexperienced group of reporters just months before the Russian election. And the fact that former Russia hands hold positions at the top of many U.S. publications (Bill Keller, executive editor of the *Times*, for starters) may present another obstacle to good reporting today. Many of these former Russia experts are familiar with the Russia of the early '90s, a more democratic and generally happier place. As Russia's political landscape changed, many of these editors did not keep in touch with the developments, yet they were still dictating the coverage.

But the biggest barrier to good U.S. journalism about Russia is the nature of U.S. journalism. American reporters are trained to rely on other people to tell their stories. In most places in the world, the primary sources of information for foreign correspondents are their local colleagues: American journalists rely on the local media to tell them what the story is and then on local journalists to point them toward sources, nuance, and interesting bits of background. It's a perfectly reasonable arrangement—as long as the local media are free of censorship. Five years ago, the Russian media were basically free, if vulnerable to government or corporate influence. Now, nearly all national broadcast media and much of the print media are controlled by the state. The change has been so sudden and drastic that even the Russians working for the few remaining independent newspapers haven't figured out how to operate: whether, in essence, to scream that the king is dead or to try to gently raise the question of the king's health. Yet foreign correspondents continue going to their familiar sources—Russian TV channels, newspapers, and print and broadcast journalists—no matter how much the Russians and their allegiances may have changed. The result is that American media repeat the propaganda printed in Russian newspapers. Even when, on occasion, the American reporter actually gets a quote offering an alternative viewpoint to one expressed in a Russian newspaper, he has allowed the Russian newspaper to frame the debate—and state-sanctioned debate in an authoritarian country rarely contains even shreds of truth. This is how we get surreal stories: a fixed election as the authentic expression of Russia's electorate.

But, if the story told by the Russian media cannot be trusted, where is the journalist to find an alternative narrative? A logical place to look would be the U.S. government. That was where reporters looked in the bad old days of the cold war and where most international stories in the U.S. media originate today. But Washington is telling the same story—one of Russia "inching toward democracy," of Putin's friendly and cooperative soul, of Russia as a partner in the fight against terrorism. Much of this story simply isn't true. The vaunted partnership in the war on terrorism amounts largely, on the U.S. side, to ignoring the Chechnya problem and, on the Russian side, to acquiescing to U.S. use of Central Asian air bases—and to nothing on Iraq or Iran, where Russia still plans to build a nuclear reactor. But, because of the hyped ongoing honeymoon between the two countries, the State Department, even when it chooses to criticize Russia, goes very easy.

THE BRITISH, THE French, and even the Canadians are lucky. In their journalistic tradition, a correspondent is allowed to inject some editorial perspective, to discuss what he sees—a fascist running for parliament, a democracy wilting, a king dying. An American reporter apparently can't trust his or her own eyes unless he or she can back them up with a quote. But the only potential sources of quotes about the sad demise of Russian democracy are the few people who've chosen to break with the national consensus. To afford them the credibility of a news source, American journalists would have to break with their own national consensus, the Russian national consensus, and, it seems, the professional consensus.

This isn't a new problem for U.S. reporting from Russia or for U.S. journalism in general. In the 1930s, *Times* correspondent Walter Duranty ignored the evidence before his very eyes to report that there was no famine in Ukraine; his Pulitzer Prize still hangs in the *Times*' hallway. In the 1950s, *Times* correspondents Harrison Salisbury and Max Frankel based their reports from Russia primarily on stories published in the Soviet press. All the while he was stationed in Moscow, Salisbury begged his bosses at the *Times* to precede his stories with a disclaimer stating that the Soviet censor cleared them. He never succeeded.

It wasn't until the late '70s, in fact—six decades after the Bolsheviks came to power, four decades after the Great Terror began—that Soviet dissidents came to be seen as an appropriate source for U.S. media. The Motherland Party and its nasty allies inside and out of the Kremlin could get a lot done in 40 to 60 years. ■

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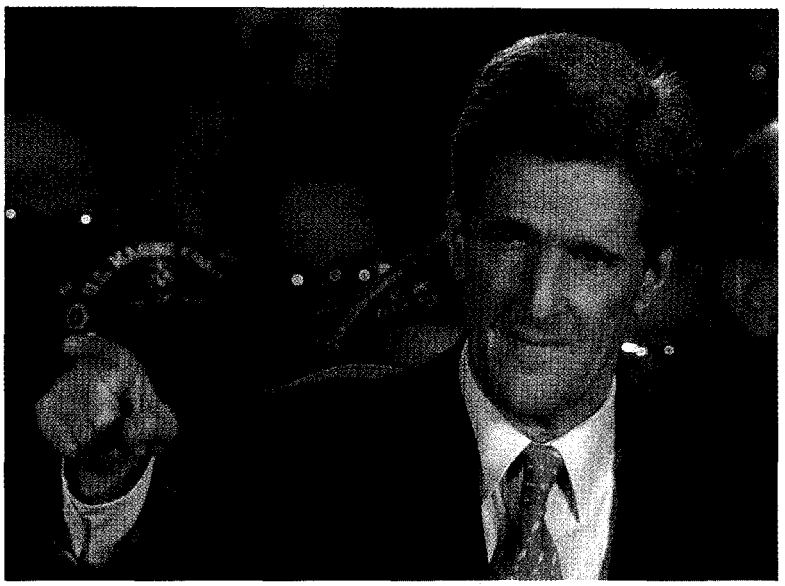
Campaign Journal

Full Circle

BY RYAN LIZZA



Though he has only surged in the last couple of weeks, John Kerry has shifted completely into front-runner mode.

JANUARY 24, NASHUA, NEW HAMPSHIRE

IT'S SATURDAY EVENING, three days before the New Hampshire primary, and a healthy chunk of the national media is in Manchester attending a discussion about politics and the press with comedian Jon Stewart. I was headed there, too, but guilt pulled me off the turnpike and onto Main Street in Nashua to watch a town-hall meeting with Joe Lieberman instead. Among campaign reporters, it is so uncool to attend Lieberman events that, when I show up at the Jon Stewart party later tonight, I find myself practically apologizing for wasting my time with him.

Lieberman has a unique strategy for winning the Democratic primary—ignoring the Democratic vote. Well, almost. These days, Lieberman is targeting independents all but exclusively. He talks about John McCain more than he talks about Bill Clinton. "John McCain and I—have I mentioned him enough?" he jokes in Nashua. His campaign's final piece of direct mail in New Hampshire goes out to 70,000 independents. You have to look hard at the two-sided flyer to learn that Lieberman is, in fact, a Democrat. In big, block letters it announces that "INDEPENDENTS CAN VOTE IN THE DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY," "YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR OUR COUNTRY," and "YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY SUPPORTING JOE LIEBERMAN." It is left to a smaller subheadline to note that Lieberman is "The one Democrat who every day has leveled with voters"—the only explicit mention of his party affiliation anywhere on the flyer. By contrast, it refers to McCain three times and Lieberman's nearly 300 endorsements from New Hampshire independents twice. A featured quote from Greg Smith, former New Hampshire attorney general and "lifelong Independent" (mentioned twice by name in the mailer) declares, "I don't vote for the party, I vote for the person."

One peculiarity of trying to cobble together a coalition from people who don't vote by party is that the people who attend Lieberman's events are more quirky and unpredictable than the staid, establishment Democrats who pack Kerry's events or the Paul Wolfowitz–hating liberals who swoon for Wesley Clark. For starters, Lieberman's town-hall meetings are the only ones that include healthy sprinklings of GOP voters. As I wait for him to arrive in Nashua, I listen to two Republicans talk about the choice before them. "He's the most Republican of the Democrats," says one. His friend responds that he is debating three options on Tuesday: voting for Bush "to reward him," voting for Howard Dean "to help throw the election" to Bush by offering up the weakest Democratic alternative, or voting for Lieberman because, in the event that Bush loses, he could tolerate him as president.

Lieberman also seems to attract an inordinate number of voters with attitudes and people with pet issues, who, if Lieberman were president, I suspect he would not spend much time on. (For example, one voter complains to the senator about car insurance.) These people occasionally make Lieberman's town-hall meetings compelling theater. His first question in Nashua is from a visibly agitated woman who has apparently seen an ad on television that has made her furious. She leaves the crowd of about 500 people that rings Lieberman and walks right into the open space where he stands. "You knew about Al Qaeda, and you did nothing about it!" she charges, pointing a finger. It turns out the ad in question is actually a Lieberman commercial, which boasts that the senator knew about Al Qaeda before Bush ever heard of the group. Lieberman tries to explain that he knew Al Qaeda was a threat but didn't have any

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foreknowledge of the September 11 attacks, but this only angers her more. "How did you know about Al Qaeda?" she asks. "What ties do you have to them?"

Despite such bumps, Lieberman is a pro in these settings, much better than his canned, parody-like speechifying before ballroom audiences. In Nashua, some 200 voters who couldn't fit in the main room spilled two floors down a double staircase into a lobby. It was the first time in this campaign that his aides had to deal with an overflow crowd. And, while the polls are contradictory, some do show Lieberman ticking upward, a fact that is e-mailed to reporters by Lieberman aides almost hourly. New Hampshire voters seem to be giving Lieberman a second look. In three days, we'll find out if they like him any more than they did at first.

JANUARY 25, HAMPTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

If Lieberman's events are an extension of the quaint, local primary campaign of the last year, in which candidates expose themselves to the press and risk angry tête-à-têtes with locals, John Kerry's feel like a harbinger of the impersonal tarmac campaign to come. His Sunday events are huge. Between 2,000 and 3,000 people show up to see him in Nashua. I catch up with him later in the seacoast town of Hampton. The event takes place in a firehouse with hoses stacked on one side, firemen's helmets on the other. Giant banners reading VETERANS FOR KERRY and FIREFIGHTERS FOR KERRY hang on the wall. Kerry is joined onstage by Harold Schaitberger, president of the national firefighters' union, the only major labor organization backing Kerry. Schaitberger's endorsement now seems like a very wise gamble.

At Kerry's events, the press is now sealed off in its own pen at the back of the room, no longer allowed to roam free; when the event ends, staffers block reporters from approaching the candidate. The plan, Kerry aides say over the weekend, is to sit on his new lead, run out the clock, and deliver a victory that forces his rivals out of the race. "We need to win this thing so big that we settle it Tuesday," announces a woman who warms up the crowd as we wait for Kerry.

Though he has only surged in the last couple of weeks, Kerry has shifted completely into front-runner mode, ignoring his primary rivals and saving all his fire for Bush. "We're here to mark the beginning of the end of the Bush presidency," he says upon taking the stage. Instead of talking about special interests, he starts his stump speech with foreign policy—a sign that pandering to liberals is out and talking tough is in.

For all the general-election staginess of the event, Kerry does take questions from the crowd, which provides a moment or two of spontaneity. Like all seasoned politicians, Kerry tries to take any question and answer it with one of the key messages from his stump speech. The more obscure the question, the harder it is for a candidate to do this, and Kerry's very first question is plenty obscure. It's one of those setups from a supporter who thinks he is helping his candidate even as he's steering him into trouble. "I think it's unfair that, as a New Englander, people often say that you won't resonate with the key Democratic constituencies around the country," a man tells Kerry. He suggests that the Massachusetts senator demonstrate his broad appeal by explaining the importance of the letter X on his baseball cap. At first, Kerry is confused. "The importance of ... the Latin—*the ten*?" he asks. The man clarifies that he means *Malcolm X*, which hardly makes things any easier for Kerry. His challenge now is to move from the deep water of radical black politics to the island safety of one of his campaign slogans.

His first attempt is aborted. "I'll tell you the importance of Malcolm X," he begins. "I was profoundly impacted by the biography of Malcolm X—" he is interrupted by a loud noise. He makes a joke about it, saving himself from what seemed like a rhetorical drift in the pro–Malcolm X direction. He pauses and reconsiders the issue. "I think that he represented the anger and thus the frustration that come from the bias, discrimination, and poverty that he lived and saw in the country," he explains. "I think it represented an extreme at that time. But an extreme that was a reaction to the lack of the institutional response to some of the needs that had been staring us in the face for a long, long period of time." He then takes a detour into Robert Kennedy's travels through Appalachia in the 1960s before finishing up by tying the frustration people felt in the '60s to the frustration being felt today with the Bush administration. "We need a political process," he says, finally confident he is reaching safe harbor, "that keeps faith with those real concerns that stare us in the face and not a political process that is there for the benefit of Halliburton, and drug companies, and powerful people who distort the agenda of the nation. That's at the center of what this race is about." Kerry has managed to jump from Malcolm X to campaign boilerplate about special interests in just three moves. Not bad.

JANUARY 26, DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Almost one year ago, I watched Howard Dean, John Edwards, and a representative for John Kerry make their pitches to a small crowd of voters at the Masonic Temple in Indianola, Iowa. It was the first time I had watched any of the Democratic presidential candidates on the stump. Edwards presented himself as a middle-of-the-road outsider who had enough experience in Washington to know what is wrong with it but not enough to have become captive to it. Dean pitched himself as a bolder—and, yes, angrier—outsider. The Kerry surrogate made just one argument: National security would dominate the race in 2004, and therefore Kerry, a veteran, was the only Democrat who could beat Bush.

A year later, and we're back almost exactly where we started. The race seems to be coming down to two outsiders offering a mix of personality and reform and one establishment candidate running on the fact that he served two tours in Vietnam. With Kerry playing the role of the front-runner

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coasting to victory, I spent the Monday before Election Day with the outsiders.

The polls today show that Dean is quickly winning back voters who abandoned him after the Iowa debacle, but I can't sense any such enthusiasm at an afternoon event at the University of New Hampshire. There are about 600 supporters in the room, mostly college kids and their professors. One-quarter or more of the attendees don't participate in the chants being organized from the stage as we wait for Dean to arrive. (My favorite: "We got to beat back the corporate attack! We got to beat, beat back that corporate attack!") Dean is an hour late, and a few of the students exit. "See ya later," one says to a friend. "I got to go write a paper."

But there are also signs that Dean's campaign is more tightly organized here than it was in Iowa. Every supporter who enters the room is asked to fill out a short volunteer form with his or her name and address on it. In Iowa, the campaign called its get-out-the-vote operation the "perfect storm." Here, there's a more serious-sounding "Volunteer Assignment Headquarters" set up to recruit supporters for last-minute phone-banking and canvassing. The emcee repeatedly announces that a shuttle bus will drive voters from the campus to the polls every 15 minutes tomorrow.

When Dean arrives, he is with his wife, Judy, who is continuing to campaign with him to help rehabilitate his loner image. She spends about 30 seconds shyly introducing Dean before retreating to the corner of the stage. After the event, Dean's fans treat her like a rock star, crushing around her for autographs. She seems flattered and bewildered by the attention. When I ask her how she's enjoying life on the trail, she says candidly, "I'm kind of liking it, actually." The emphasis is on "kind of."

Like Lieberman, Dean is trying to don the mantle of John McCain. When he talks about his issues, it's now in terms of what they say about his character, specifically the fact that he "stands up for what he believes." As for his temperament, Dean is regaining some of his bite now that the memory of the scream speech is fading. But he keeps his emotions under control. When a Lyndon LaRouche heckler yells that Dean is owned by George Soros, Dean resists the temptation to tear the guy's head off. "Not likely," he responds sarcastically before continuing his speech.

It's already a cliché, but conversations with voters at every stop return to the issue of who can beat Bush. It's as if a year of political coverage insisting that Democrats were looking for an angry, message candidate to satisfy their partisan id has been proved wrong overnight. A lot of scrutiny is being given to even the most tangential questions about electability. "People who are usually very thoughtful are asking questions like, 'What is the deal with Teresa Heinz? Where is Doctor Steinberg?' " says Judy Spiller, who is checking out Dean in Durham. "It's as if we've been co-opted by the most superficial aspects of the political system we all hate. But we have to find someone who can out-personality George Bush." She's trying to decide between Kerry and Dean.

After the event, I follow the Deans out the door. I've shadowed Dean as he worked crowds maybe a dozen times over the last year. Since Iowa, he has been different. As he signs autographs and shakes hands along one of his final New Hampshire rope-lines, he asks for votes with the plaintive urgency of a man whose fate is in the hands of people he doesn't quite trust because they have already let him down once. Dean looks one man in the eyes and clenches his hands. "Don't forget to vote tomorrow," he says. "I need your help." Then Dean glances over at his wife and looks back at the man. "*We* need your help."

A few hours later, I catch up with John Edwards at a rally in Manchester. If Dean's events sometimes look like the bar scene from *Star Wars*, Edwards's traveling show has the feel of an Abercrombie & Fitch fashion shoot. Instead of chants about corporate attacks by an angry bearded man in a union shirt, the Edwards event features the warm and fuzzy visuals of eight rows of smartly dressed Granite State voters waving small American flags. A volunteer in a white button-down shirt leads them in singing, "Yes, oh yes, John is the best!" and "Vote for Edwards, vote, vote for Edwards." It has a very 1950s-era feel to it.

The contrast between Dean and Edwards could hardly be more clear—one seems unscripted; the other, rehearsed to an almost disconcerting perfection. In both cases, it's both a strength and a liability. Whatever his failings, many people are attracted to Dean because he seems authentic and speaks his mind. But, when you live by off-the-cuff remarks, you can die by them, too. One second, you're the straight-talking doctor telling hard truths; the next, you're wailing like a pirate in front of millions of Americans. Similarly, Edwards's gift is that he is a natural politician who connects with voters. But, watching him deliver his theatrical, thoroughly engrossing stump speech on stage at the Palace Theatre, I can't help but wonder how well he'll wear. He delivers a polished and inspirational piece of political oratory, but he's also a politician who has a narrow comfort zone and who hews closely to a script. Even if it is a great script, it can start to seem a little phony after a while.

One of these two men will become the anti-Kerry, an outsider making the case that, far from being a warrior against special interests, the four-term Massachusetts senator is a Washington insider who has shifted his position on a dozen issues and has no record of reform. That's the way this race started a year ago, and that's how it will probably finish.

JANUARY 27, MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

ALL DAY, THE exit polls have made it clear that Kerry is winning; the only question is by how much. Dean's comeback seems to have stalled, and Edwards has slipped back into the Lieberman-Clark pack. When the polls close, Kerry's margin of twelve points is bigger than anyone predicted all day, destroying the Dean comeback story and erasing Edwards from the next day's coverage. At the Dean party at the Uni-

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versity of Southern New Hampshire, aides are not only spinning their candidate's disappointing finish, they're also prespinning his performance in the seven states that will vote on February 3—Missouri, South Carolina, Arizona, Oklahoma, New Mexico, North Dakota, and Delaware. The Dean campaign has never been confident of its chances in these states minus the momentum of victories in Iowa or New Hampshire. For months, senior aides have instead talked up the importance of the states that vote after them—Michigan and Washington (February 7), Maine (February 8), and Wisconsin (February 17). Getting crushed in Iowa and New Hampshire has only made their trepidation about February 3 worse. Still, if there are any takers left, Dean aides are again making the case that their vaunted organization will carry them through. Because Dean already has organizations in all the February 3 states, "We have the luxury of traveling to the states where it makes sense to play based on tonight's results," says spokesman Jay Carson.

Team Dean is also quick to make the Clinton analogy. Like the "Comeback Kid" in 1992, Dean aides say a second-place finish here in New Hampshire has resurrected the campaign. "You have to remember," says Gina Glantz, a top adviser, "he came into this state almost twenty points down, and he came back." Well, sort of. He lost by twelve points. But the Dean folks argue that—again, like Clinton in 1992—their man still has plenty of time to round up delegates. "Clinton lost ten primaries before he won one," says Carson, "and we still call him President Clinton." There are a few problems with the analogy, though. First, Clinton didn't compete in Iowa in 1992 (all the contenders ceded the state to native son Tom Harkin), so he didn't have a major defeat under his belt as he went into New Hampshire. Second, Clinton lost the state by only eight points. And, most important, Clinton's second-place finish showed he could compete in a state outside his regional stronghold. Dean, by contrast, comes from a state that shares a 192-mile-long border with New Hampshire. In 2003, he raised several times more money than Clinton did in 1991, and, unlike Clinton, Dean didn't play within the spending-caps system that would have limited the amount of money he threw into the two early states. Dean, in other words, had every advantage in Iowa and New Hampshire and still managed to win only his core sliver of one-fifth to one-quarter of the Democratic electorate.

Only a few weeks ago, Dean aides argued that his anticipated wins in Iowa and New Hampshire would effectively end the race. Joe Trippi—who Dean fired this week—often talked about how any candidate whose strategy was to "hang out" until February 3 would be steamrolled by Dean's killer momentum. Now that Kerry has won both states convincingly, aides don't talk about unstoppable juggernauts but instead remind reporters that the race is a long slog to win the most delegates. "You're talking about two states and very few delegates," says Glantz. "It's a long way to the nomination." Glantz has a point. The race looks very different from the perspective of delegates than it does from the perspective of primary victories. Although few have paid attention, the fact is that, thanks to the support of super-delegates (party leaders who can back any candidate), coming out of New Hampshire Dean is actually beating Kerry in delegates won, 113 to 94.

Before, Dean aides argued that they had the only campaign that could fund itself for a long battle into the spring. But it's becoming clear that Dean actually poured a lot of his $40 million into the two early states to finish off the contest before it started. Glantz insists that the campaign has enough money to carry on. "We raised $1.8 million since Iowa," she says. "I don't think they'll stop pumping—as far as money and as far as enthusiasm. ... They don't want to lose faith." But one Dean fund-raiser I talked to early in the day was holding her hands up in prayer as she received exit polls on her cell phone that showed a closer race with Kerry than the final results. Any loss worse than single digits, she said, would be a tough sell with donors. Nonetheless, Dean aides insist the governor is in the race for the long haul. "You have to kill us to get rid of us," says Zephyr Teachout, Dean's Internet guru and the most fervent believer in the Dean revolution. "And this doesn't do that." Maybe not. But the revolution has certainly been postponed. Far from being the leader of an insurrection that transforms the Democratic Party—and even the country—Dean, like the race itself, has come full circle. Once again, he's a scrappy and intriguing outsider nipping at the heels of a strongly favored establishment frontrunner. It's as if an entire year of American politics was just one long dream. ■

Howard Dean once again finds himself an outsider nipping at the heels of a strongly favored establishment candidate.

WIN MCNAMEE/REUTERS/LANDOV

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Transmutations

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE HISTORIES of Australia and the United States are obvious. The proportion of space to settled areas, the pressure on the natives of those spaces by European immigrants, the relations between natives and whites, these are only some of the links. Film in Australia has not made an icon of the outback as thoroughly as we have done with the West, but Australian "Westerns" occur. An exceptional one is **THE TRACKER**, which has the shape of an offbeat American Western and seems at first a sort of Down Under copy. But it develops characters and relationships that are indigenous.

It is 1922. At the start three white riders are heading through the bush led by an Aborigine tracker. Subtitles, much like the character tags in an old-time theater program, are tacked to these men: the tough police officer, the dewy young recruit, the civilian conscript, and the grizzled tracker. They are hunting a native who is said to have killed a white woman, and the search has been going on for days. Note that there is—at the start, anyway—another element, the white men's mounts and their packhorse. The director, Rolf de Heer, makes much of the horses, their plodding, their straining, their hooves pounding over rocks, as if to underscore that, without these usually ignored components of such a story, white law would not exist. Equine collaboration sustains the authority out there. (Unlike Native Americans, these Aborigines have no horses and do not ride.)

The feeling that this might have been Arizona, with a sheriff's posse guided by an Apache scout, does not last long. The relationship between tracker and riders is differently tinged here. Servant though the tracker is, he is not only superior in wilderness cunning, in communion with the world they traverse, and in quietness of spirit, he seems to be silently chuckling most of the time. Yet we eventually learn that he is not a racial traitor: he has his own reasons for guiding the white men. In any story about a native and colonists, we are always prepared for the superior skills of the native, but here there is also a difference of basic view. (A comic index of differing values: every morning the white men shave while the bristly tracker, watching them, grins.)

The three whites are an author's careful assortment. (De Heer wrote the screenplay.) The military brute, the innocent, and the ethical nondescript supply the necessary notes for a triad. Riding through what we might have thought was enemy territory, they meet no opposition: they encounter only a few old people at first, then some others and children. The officer kills them all, calmly, as if it were just part of his job. Then, in an almost desultory way, opposition starts, helped eventually by the revolted tracker.

Even without the songs on the soundtrack by an Aborigine singer, even without the "primitive" paintings of climactic moments that De Heer inserts, the film would mutate into para-cinema—a work meant to be seen as more than a story, a thematic quintessence. A good deal of this sense is generated by the tracker himself. He is played by David Gulpilil, who was in *Rabbit-Proof Fence*—an actor who simply and endearingly presents a man who can suffer and smile and wait because he knows more than his masters. The others in the cast are adequate to help give the film some feeling of a ballad.

The ultimate subject of that ballad? Space. De Heer's directing is especially notable for transmuting the film's very setting into its theme. He reminds us throughout that all these people are puny compared with the vastness around them. This contrast is familiar in Westerns, particularly those of John Ford, but here that contrast is something more than visual: we get the feeling that because these Aborigines are aware of their modest size in their world, they are aware of their place in the scheme of things. The whites, on the other hand, are there as emperors.

A Russian film attempts the same transmutation of its filmic elements into the thematic. **THE RETURN** deals with a man who returns to his family—a wife and two sons about fourteen and twelve—after a twelve-year absence. In the course of the next few days he takes the boys on a fishing trip that ends unexpectedly, as does the film.

Here are some of the questions that the film raises and doesn't answer. Where had the father been? Why is he accepted when he comes back? How did this family, far out in the country with no visible means of support, survive in his absence? Once back, why does he spend so little time with his beautiful wife? On the fishing trip, what is the business that the father conducts aboard a freighter on a lake? What is in the box that the father digs out of the ground in a forest? The director was asked this last question in an interview and said, "It's a secret. In fact, it's of no importance really. It contains some mystery which disappears together with the mysterious father."

It would be tempting to agree with the non-importance except that the screenwriters, Vladimir Moiseenko and Alexander Novototsky, apparently created precisely the ambiguous script that the director, Andrey Zvyagintsev, wanted. He has in fact emphasized the mistiness of the screenplay by putting much of the picture in literal mist. The sky is always gray, the flat lakeshore landscape is sad, the air is often cottony. The film is technically in color, but not effectually, and there is almost no music. The whole might be an exercise in gossamer myth, signifying a dream-in-life. Still, it never quite realizes the oneiric quality because, paradoxically, of its best achievement—the performances of the two boys. They are vital, insistent. Their beings contradict

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the dreaminess and make us ask the questions mentioned above.

Vladimir Garin, the older boy, and Ivan Dobronravov, his brother, have to carry the film. They are on screen very much more than anyone else, and there is never anything in them but verity. Their feelings range from brotherly dudgeon to brotherly confidence to awe and fright and disgust, and their performances have no hint of fabrication. These boys are further instances of phenomenal acting by very young people. (Nothing to do with child stars. The youngsters that I mean are rarely seen in other films—the children in *Rabbit-Proof Fence*, for example.) Part of their attainment is, of course, intelligence, part the mimetic gift that most children have; and part of it surely is because the director, Zvyagintsev, whose first film this is, was trained as an actor and has done a lot of acting. The boys benefit, though, oddly, their reality contradicts the very film they are in.

A note past irony. I've just learned that, after *The Return* was finished, young Garin was drowned in an accident much like a scene in the film. ■

DAVID HAJDU ON MUSIC
The Body Eclectic

IF THIS PARAGRAPH WERE A PIECE of music by Dave Douglas, it would make a summing-up statement here at the beginning, then proceed in reverse motion until it ended with an introduction of its main theme. Or it would start with a core idea and build through accretion, amassing in layers instead of progressing conventionally in any direction. Phrases would be planned exactingly to sound spontaneous, and improvised parts would take off on subtle compositional elements such as timbre. The vernacular and the formal would conjoin. You would recognize the musical vocabulary as jazz, but in averting conventions it would seem like a strange new language.

DAVE DOUGLAS: STRANGE LIBERATION (RCA)

And if this paragraph were a second piece by Douglas, it would sound very little like the last one. It would differ in style as well as form, and the piece to follow it would be wholly unlike both its predecessors.

Not long ago Douglas performed for a week at the Village Vanguard with a jazz group modeled on one of Miles Davis's classic quintets (trumpet, saxophone, Rhodes electric piano, bass, and drums). Less than a month later he was at Carnegie Hall, playing lyrical obbligato trumpet with the jazz singer and pianist Patricia Barber. Within two weeks of that, he was at Tonic, the artsy club on the Lower East Side, where he experimented with electronic music—one member of his band was doing record scratches on a turntable, another was generating digital samples with a PowerBook. Nine days later Douglas showed up at CBGBs to do a "free-jazz" session, improvising without prepared music. It is difficult to imagine any other person working in all of those settings, even if he or she were doing the sound or the lights.

A record store could stock Dave Douglas CDs in at least seven different categories: jazz, avant-garde, chamber music, electronic music, world, folk, and (perhaps most accurately) miscellaneous. One of his albums is a tribute to the big-band composer and pianist Mary Lou Williams, its music played by a traditional jazz combo; another features variations on "Vanitas Vanitatum" by Robert Schumann, arranged for trumpet, guitar, and drums; another has an adaptation of a folk tune from Burma, scored for violin and cello; another includes a re-write of the *Goldfinger* movie theme for trumpet, violin, accordion, and bass; another is a modern-dance score with Japanese drums. Douglas's last CD, *Freak-in*, was an all-electronic recording, his first in that element, an amalgam of processed sounds and digital samples with a couple of traditional jazz instruments (Douglas's trumpet, a saxophone, others) mixed in; and his latest release, *Strange Liberation*, is a vintage-style album of small-band jazz with the guitarist Bill Frisell joining Douglas's working quintet. While others in the music business grouse about the fragmentation of the marketplace, Douglas is a step ahead: he has himself fragmented his own career.

JAZZ IS GOING THROUGH A NEW phase, and Dave Douglas seems to embody it neatly. For most of the previous two decades, a period anticipating the centennial of jazz's origins around the turn of the last century, the jazz world had seemed fixated on its history. A generation of young musicians, led by the gifted and charismatic Wynton Marsalis, challenged its immediate predecessors (as every musical generation tends to do, one way or another) by charging that the electronic experimentation and rock-oriented "fusion" of the 1960s and '70s had not advanced the music through innovation, but had debased it by forfeiting the musical elements that had made earlier styles of jazz feel jazzy—and also black: that is, the blues and the syncopated rhythm of swing. In the name of restoring jazz to its past greatness, honoring the legacy of its iconic masters, and preserving its identity as a mode of African American expression, Marsalis and his acolytes institutionalized a canonical approach to jazz, a jazz like subscription concert music, and as in all canons the music began to harden in that mold.

More recently, jazz has been refreshed and rejuvenated by many of the same external influences—pop and rock, world music, the Western classical tradition, the avant-garde—that classicists were disclaiming as corruptive just a few years ago. Cassandra Wilson is singing Bob Dylan and Robbie Robertson songs; Bill Frisell has made a bluegrass-style CD; the tenor saxophonist Joe Lovano has recorded an homage to Enrico Caruso, arranged in the vein of an Italian street band; the alto saxophonist Greg Osby is composing for jazz instruments and string quartet; and the pianist Danilo Perez has composed a suite inspired by the music of his native Panama. "The world is scattered—I think it's just the way things work now," Douglas has remarked.

He speaks and comports himself as he plays his trumpet, with seemingly effortless vigor. He is equally adroit at cooking up musical experiments and articulating

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their intent. "Everyone's looking for where is jazz going, where is music going?" he told me. "It's going up and down and in every direction at once. Everybody's doing a million different things. It used to be that you look at Coltrane's career or at Miles's career and they went from this to this to this and then to this, and it was kind of a progression. There's no logical reason other than me learning that I've gone from one group to a different one and then another different one. Having all the different bands and writing different kinds of music is me trying to not be in a trap. How differently can I play? How different can I make a new project? Without the pressure, what are you really doing?"

WHILE EVERY COFFEE BAR in gentrified Brooklyn may be full of smart, bespectacled white men who can talk up the *dernier cri*, Douglas's sort has not been at the center of the jazz world since the 1950s, when Dave Brubeck took the music northeasterly to the realm of "third-stream" intellectualism. Douglas has become one of the most celebrated jazz musicians of the day, winning the major jazz awards for composition and performance, playing concerts around the world. Among jazzheads as pedigreed as the historian and conductor Gunther Schuller, he has been praised as not only an important contemporary jazz voice but as a primary creator whose innovations may have the capacity to influence a new generation of musicians. "In my pantheon of composers," Schuller says, "are those who not only write masterpieces and all of that, but who also write music which presents a new *modus vivendi*, a new way of going forward in music—composers who create something that is bigger than themselves even, so that others can feed on that contribution for decades, and [Douglas] has that already, not in the magnitude of a Beethoven or an Ellington—yet—but he's certainly, in my view, in that league, on that level of creativity."

Like Brubeck, Douglas has garnered acclaim in part for transplanting some ideas from Western concert music to jazz-oriented situations, in course raising questions about the authenticity of his work as jazz. More significantly and originally, Douglas has drawn from a range of other, less conventional influences such as Balkan folk music, Japanese drumming, electronica, and the American pop radio of his suburban youth. Douglas's music, in its quirky globalist eclecticism and unorthodoxy, is an overt challenge to the primacy of the tenets of swing and the blues in the jazz aesthetic.

Douglas himself prefers not to call his music jazz. "I hesitate to use the word jazz now," Douglas explains, "because it's so fraught with tension. I'm perfectly comfortable with the fact that a lot of people feel that some of what I do is not jazz, and if I can grow into something that's beyond a jazz musician, I would be perfectly proud of that. However, when I hear people use the word jazz in a way that I disagree with, I get this really angry and proprietary feeling of wanting to protect the word, so on some level it means something to me. When I see that someone is trying to limit what jazz can be and shut certain people out of the house, I feel that they're cutting an avenue of exploration and ingenuity, and I feel that it's bad for the genre, because the genre dies if it can't change. There's no artistic need to put a door on genres and styles, absolutely none."

He does not see tradition and innovation as mutually exclusive in jazz or whatever you call it. To the contrary, Douglas considers innovation the essence of the jazz tradition. A former honors student at Exeter who was nearly expelled for breaking into a locked hall to play the piano, he listens to Duke Ellington and reads Ezra Pound; like Ellington he rejects generic labels as restrictive and thinks "beyond category," like Pound he pursues creative invention as an artistic imperative, as "the necessity of making it new."

"I think that the music that we now think of as traditional was incredibly innovative in its time, and music that's innovative now will be traditional in another fifty years. I think the music that I'm making comes out of that tradition, and that's why I get upset when I hear people saying things about jazz that I feel are putting it in the grave." Those things are not only that jazz is inextricable from the African American experience but also that the music's best days ended four or five decades ago, propositions that were rising to prominence in the early 1980s, just as Douglas was trying to start a career in New York. Watching Ken Burns's documentary series *Jazz*, which devoted twenty hours to an exploration of these themes, Douglas resisted the urge to throw a hard object at his television set.

LIKE WYNTON MARSALIS, DAVE Douglas is an artist of unyielding determination. After a year at Berklee, where he was told that the trumpet was probably not for him, Douglas tried the New England Conservatory, and left it in 1983 to move to New York, where he got his undergraduate degree at NYU's Gallatin School for independent study. His trumpet style was still forming but already unorthodox; he was teaching himself how to produce unexpected, almost extra-musical tones on the trumpet, and his improvisations already incorporated ideas from pop radio and classical music, as well as jazz. Too odd-sounding to get hired for the workaday gigs in hotel bands and theater orchestras wherein New York musicians traditionally serve their apprenticeships (Marsalis had been in the pit band of *Sweeney Todd* a few years earlier), Douglas organized a group, bought a sound system and a gasoline generator, and set up shop on the sidewalk at Astor Place. "He will not be denied," declares the saxophonist Joshua Roseman, who has played with Douglas for ten years. Programmed for a positively Hegelian response to negativity, Douglas has always seemed focused not so much on proving what he can do, but on disproving what anyone says he cannot do.

In the mid-1980s and early 1990s, contrarians interested in jazz gravitated to Lower Manhattan and the experimental music scene centered in and around the Knitting Factory, then a musty little hostel for outré and Bohemian elitism on the perimeter of SoHo. Jazz was entering one of its schismatic phases, with polar phenomena developing contemporaneously, largely in reaction to each other. One group of young musicians—most visibly Marsalis, as well as Terence Blanchard, Roy Hargrove, Cyrus Chestnut, and others, the majority (but not all) of them African American—were leading a much publicized movement into classicism, reviving the music's traditional elements (especially swing and the blues) and the canonical works of its past masters (particularly Armstrong and Ellington); while a mirror group of musicians roughly the same age—John Zorn, Don Bryon, Bill Frisell, and their peers, most (but not all) of them white—were pursuing an equally rigorous nonconformity, avoiding the standard jazz texts, drawing from the musics of far-flung cultures, and essentially making

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lots of noise. The neat geography of their home bases, the Knitting Factory on Houston Street and Marsalis's jazz program at Lincoln Center, led critics to call the phenomena "downtown" jazz and "uptown" jazz. Both were fortresses of orthodoxy.

FOR ALL ITS AMBITION AND DARing, Douglas's early music was susceptible to the usual criticisms of the avant-garde. It could be cold and overly cerebral. As the pianist and composer Fred Hersch, who has played with Douglas and considers him his friend, has remarked, "Dave and some of the guys around him, they had a way of playing a kind of jazz in quotes. They played it sort of like, Now we're going to play ... *jazz*. Sometimes, it seemed like some of the players in that particular axis might kind of look down a little bit at people who play things that sound more like straight-ahead jazz. I respect what they're doing, but I also think that playing jazz on its terms from a deep place is such a wonderful and difficult thing to do."

After a stint co-leading the probative band *New and Used* with the saxophonist Andy Laster, Douglas formed a group to play his own music in 1992 and recorded the first album of his own compositions the following year. He already had a distinctive trumpet style. He used a splash palette of startling tonal colors and textures, and he showed a knack for crafting witty, elliptical, oddly structured improvisations, although his compositional voice was just forming. Struggling to develop mastery of his instrument, Douglas studied technique with the classical trumpeter Carmine Caruso and still takes lessons from the late teacher's protégé, Laurie Frink. Before every gig at the Knitting Factory, he would arrive two to three hours early and practice in an empty office. As the jazz-classicism movement began to wane in the late 1990s and the jazz press's interminable arguing about Wynton Marsalis lost currency, critics needed a new New Thing, and Dave Douglas was ideally equipped: forward-thinking, "downtown," soft-spoken, and white.

At the Village Vanguard recently, Douglas proved the value of his effort. His band, configured like a Miles Davis group that had been considered wildly adventurous in its day, was a wink at jazz history. Douglas was playing on the music's sacred ground, in tribute to the jazz musician whom he reveres for his obdurate unpredictability. Douglas used the old Davis ensemble as a launching pad, then zipped to uncharted points.

One of the first pieces that he played on the opening night, his original "Deluge" (from his album *The Infinite*), set the mode. It started with some dissonant electric-piano chords playing off a jagged, halting beat. Douglas, in crumbled green khakis and a black short-sleeve shirt tucked out of his trousers and opened to the third button on the top, closed his eyes, lowered his head, and put his trumpet to his mouth. He raised his head slowly as he played, at full force from the first note, his eyes piercing ahead. Douglas's solo, typical of his mature playing, was a rush of unexpected musical ideas—a passage of staccato notes toying with the piece's zigzag time, followed by a long melodic line, and then a sudden flurry of offbeat phrases that would have seemed like a spontaneous eruption if Douglas's bandmates had not jumped in, playing the intricate phrases in tight harmony. Listening, no matter how closely, you could rarely tell what was improvised and what was composed and tightly rehearsed.

I do not remember ever hearing Dave Douglas play a musical cliché, and he rarely repeats himself. In both respects, he is among the rarest of jazz creatures. For all his eclecticism, moreover, he retains his own musical identity. Few musicians other than Wynton Marsalis draw so freely from so many sources, and no one sounds at all like him. ■

Richard Wolin
Kant at Ground Zero

PHILOSOPHY IN A TIME OF TERROR: DIALOGUES WITH JÜRGEN HABERMAS AND JACQUES DERRIDA
Edited by Giovanna Borradori
(University of Chicago Press, 208 pp., $25)

I.

WAS PHILOSOPHY PREpared for the events of September 11? To judge by all available evidence, the answer must be a resounding "no." For some time now, contemporary philosophy has viewed "worldliness"—the perfectly natural idea that thought should take a healthy and constructive interest in worldly affairs—as a source of contamination. Analytic philosophy's triumph in the decades following World War II meant that henceforth philosophy would subscribe to a primarily "therapeutic" self-understanding; its predominant aim was to ferret out and eliminate the "pseudo-problems" that had beset the history of thought. As Wittgenstein instructed, "philosophical problems arise when language goes on a holiday." According to this conception, philosophy's mission is basically a negative one: to keep language honest. Correspondingly, the history of metaphysics was written off as a history of error: an attempt to set forth claims about the ultimate nature of society, nature, and man that were simply beyond the ken of language.

Wittgenstein's approach—and the analytical method that he helped to engender, and that J. L. Austin brought to a corrosive perfection—was radically contextualist. He characterized discursive practices as "language games" and stressed the parallels between speaking a language and knowing how to "follow a rule." But such an approach entailed a total collapse of "is" and "ought." Such philosophy, for which the meaning of a word was sought in its use, was devoid of a normative or evaluative dimension capable of transcending the contextual practice of this or that "language game." A thoroughgoing relativism was the consequence of this approach. How should we respond if the rules of a given "language game" were morally objectionable—the language game of ethnic cleansing, for example? Where might we look for the conceptual leverage needed to unmask egregious instances of social

Richard Wolin's new book, THE SEDUCTION OF UNREASON: THE INTELLECTUAL ROMANCE WITH FASCISM FROM NIETZSCHE TO POSTMODERNISM *(Princeton University Press), will be published in May.*

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injustice or political domination? In what philosophical idiom might we denounce those who perpetrate crimes against humanity? On all these counts, the philosophy of ordinary language seems manifestly impotent. Wittgenstein himself owned up to the quiescent implications of his method when in *Philosophical Investigations* he confessed that the philosophy of ordinary language "leaves everything as it is."

ACADEMIC PHILOSOPHY'S studied aversion to worldly affairs has been compounded by the requirements of professionalization. In a classic instance of "unintended consequences," young people whose "love of wisdom" inspires them to enter the field soon discover that these motivations are counterproductive: they have almost nothing to do with the demands of "philosophy as a vocation." Of course, philosophy throughout its history has often had a world-transforming function, for good or for ill: in ancient Greece, in early Christianity, in the Renaissance, in the Enlightenment. But today "engagement" is frowned upon, except as a sub-discipline of a profession. (Are you concerned about the damage to the environment? Then submit a paper to *Philosophy and Public Affairs* and then return to "real" philosophy.) It has little or no bearing on the sophisticated bureaucratic mechanisms of professional advancement. The departmental rap on "public philosophers" is usually that they are wasting their time with amateur philosophy.

A quick look at, say, the eighteenth century would show how central and fundamental the link between philosophy and public purpose was. But no more. Most philosophers have become *Fachmenschen,* or "specialists," in precisely the sense that Weber feared: "Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart, these nullities imagine they have attained a level of civilization without precedent." As a result, the realm of public philosophy has been abandoned to the so-called left Heideggerians—the likes of Jean Baudrillard, Slavoj Žižek, and Paul Virilio—who have succeeded in filling the vacuum with a vengeance. Came September 11, and they quickly brought their glib up-to-the-minute postmodernist idiom to bear on the terrible events. For want of serious philosophical competition, their notions have been widely quoted, debated, and discussed.

Surely the "lesson" of September 11 is that in a globalized civilization lapses in "moral development"—say, the repressive and hate-filled creed purveyed by Wahhabi Islam—are liable to have unforeseeable and potentially devastating worldwide effects. In previous epochs, political deformations that occurred in this or that corner of the world could be safely ignored with only minor external repercussions, but our current state of global interconnectedness has changed all that. Who would have suspected that a relatively small group of militants based in one of the world's most backward and impoverished nations could, with relative ease, perpetrate an act of terrorism against America the likes of which we had never before seen? (More people were killed in the September 11 attacks than at Pearl Harbor.)

What makes the interventions by the so-called left Heideggerians so odious is that their rhetoric rarely rises above the level of *Schadenfreude.* As good Heideggerians, they are simply incapable of naturally appreciating the validity and the worth of democratic political institutions—civil liberties, republican government, and self-determination. For Heidegger, after all, the United States was nothing more than a technological Moloch: the "site of catastrophe," an extreme manifestation of civilizational *Untergang* or decline. In keeping with this perspective, the pamphlets of Žižek and Baudrillard exude a barely concealed glee about Osama bin Laden's "divine surprise" in September 2001. For Baudrillard, the attacks represented a glorious, long-awaited instance of wish-fulfillment: the Al Qaeda terrorists may have perpetrated the deed, but the act itself was something the entire world had long dreamed of and desired. For the postmodernist sage, criticism of the attacks cannot mask

> the prodigious jubilation of seeing this world superpower meet with destruction.... For it is [the United States] that, by its unbearable power, fomented all the violence infused throughout the world, and thus the terrorist imagination that dwells in all of us. Haven't we dreamt of this event, hasn't the entire world, without exception, dreamt of it; no one could not dream of the destruction of a power that had become hegemonic to such a point.... In essence, it was [the terrorists] who committed the deed, but it is we who wished for it.

With the publication of such texts, postmodernism's trademark cynicism about morality and democracy has reached (I hope) its nadir. In late 2001, following the Afghanistan war, Baudrillard granted an interview to *Der Spiegel.* When questioned whether the removal of the Taliban from power was not in fact an emancipatory political development, he emphatically disagreed: any expression of American power was a priori condemnable. When interrogated further about whether the spread of human rights and democracy to the Middle East and the Third World was desirable, the postmodernist philosopher again replied in the negative. Human rights, he claimed, are merely a cover for superpower global hegemony: "I believe that human rights have already been subsumed by the process of globalization and function as an alibi. They belong to the juridical and moral superstructure—in sum, they are *advertising.*" To find a comparable instance of unadulterated nihilistic contempt for democratic norms, one would have to adduce the Nazi jurist Carl Schmitt, who famously proclaimed that "whoever says humanity lies."

II.

JÜRGEN HABERMAS WAS PREPARING for a guest lectureship in New York when the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon occurred. As it happened, Jacques Derrida was also scheduled to teach in New York that fall. Since two of the world's leading philosophers would be in Manhattan a few weeks after the catastrophe, why not solicit their observations and thoughts and then publish them in book form? Thus was born *Philosophy in a Time of Terror,* the brainchild of Giovanna Borradori, an enterprising professor of philosophy at Vassar.

Habermas and Derrida have for decades represented philosophical antipodes. Habermas, a self-professed child of the Enlightenment, has devoted his immense talents to recovering the progressive intellectual traditions—from Kant to the Frankfurt School—that had been brutally expunged from German soil during the Nazi dictatorship. He has consistently acted not only as a philosophical luminary but also as a vocal public intellectual—and on a number of

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salient occasions, notably the *Historikerstreit* of the 1980s, as the moral consciousness of his nation. Few would deny that his great labor of philosophical reclamation has been remarkably successful. Several years ago he observed that the Federal Republic's singular accomplishment was to have firmly anchored Germany in the political orbit of the West, thereby ensuring an ineffaceable role for tolerance, basic rights, and rule of law.

In the academy Habermas is best known for his achievements in the field of moral philosophy. He is a highly original disciple of Kant. His unique contribution to this realm has been a variant of Kantian moral universalism known as "discourse ethics." For Kant, those actions alone count as "moral" that could withstand the test of "universalizability": that is, only insofar as I could will that in a specific moral situation every other person act as I would may my action qualify as moral. Like other philosophers, Habermas has remained mistrustful of the solipsistic implications of Kant's standpoint. He has forcefully argued that the individual subject's powers of moral reasoning need to be supplemented by a broader, communicative frame of reference. Discourse ethics holds that judgments of morality need to be redeemed by recourse to actual or hypothetical discourses with other people. In this way, moral reasoning ceases to be monological, as in Kant. In a variation on Kant's Categorical Imperative, the formula for discourse ethics runs: "Only those norms can claim to be valid that meet (or could meet) with the approval of all affected in their capacity as participants in a practical discourse."

As a transcendental philosopher working in the Kantian tradition, Habermas remains acutely aware of the fallible nature of all empirical moral consensuses. Thus, even if all of the preconditions of communicative reason were satisfied (that is, assuming that norms of "fairness," "rightness," and "sincerity" were fulfilled), the result might well be flawed and require remedial discursive mediation—more plainly, it might require more discussion. Empirical results must be constantly checked against transcendental normative expectations.

By situating Habermas within the spectrum of contemporary ethical thought, one can begin to appreciate the distinctive nature of his moral "voice" as well as his distance from other, more cynical perspectives, notably that of Derrida. In view of its unflagging commitment to the primacy of the "moral point of view," Habermas's approach bears comparison to that of the late John Rawls, who is often credited with singlehandedly reviving the discipline of moral philosophy. Both are ethical "cognitivists." They believe that, fundamentally, moral problems concern questions of "truth." They hold that objective considerations of "right" or "wrong" are at stake, and that these considerations may be adjudicated by recourse to methods of argumentation. Yet the main tendencies in twentieth-century moral philosophy have been decidedly non-cognitivist or "emotivist." Under the twin influences of logical positivism and the philosophy of ordinary language, philosophers have been loath to admit that questions of truth are at stake in moral judgments. Instead they have held that moral issues boil down to individual preferences—or, like art, to subjective matters of taste.

In their mutual aversion to transcendental philosophy, postmodernism and the philosophy of ordinary language climax in an ungainly ethical and cultural relativism. Both approaches entail an unqualified defense of the "other" in his or her irreducible "otherness." But what happens when the "other" in question happens to be an unregenerate fundamentalist monster—the very embodiment of political repression and religious intolerance? It is on this problem that the happy relativists founder. What we need after September 11, in other words, is a philosophy that is capable of accomplishing two ends at once. It must defend the moral legitimacy of democratic norms while at the same time respecting the realities of cultural difference. And discourse ethics is capable of satisfying both these requirements. It knows how to reconcile universal morality with cultural pluralism. Might the twenty-first century, then, be Habermasian? Only if we are lucky.

In comparison with Habermas, Derrida represents an obverse philosophical tradition: the "hermeneutics of suspicion," an avowedly anti-Enlightenment standpoint that derives from the work of Nietzsche and Heidegger. In almost every respect Derrida's philosophy of "deconstruction"

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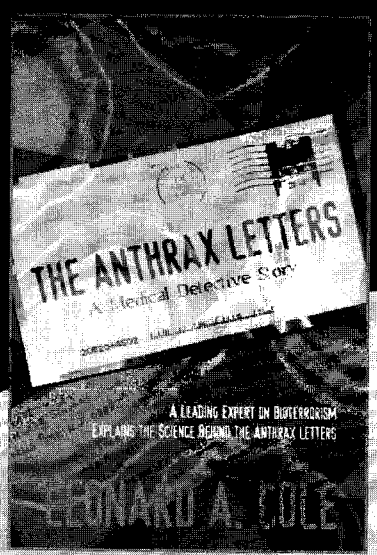
–James P. Pinkerton in *Newsday*



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could not be more unlike Habermas's veneration of "discussion oriented toward mutual understanding." Derrida made his name as a sly and indefatigable critic of reason. In the 1940s Heidegger observed that "reason, venerated for centuries, is the most stiff-necked adversary of thought"—a statement that might be construed as Derrida's point of departure. Heidegger famously advocated the "destruction" of Western metaphysics, and deconstruction, in no uncertain terms, picks up where Heidegger left off. In the lexicon of deconstruction, reason is incurably "logocentric": it embodies the "tyranny of the logos" and, as such, suppresses otherness, heterogeneity, and difference—concepts that, among the deconstructionist faithful, possess a type of theological sanctity. For Derrida, the trademark of Western thought, dating back to Parmenides and Plato, has been a systematic repression of marginal elements ("otherness") that fail to conform to reason's oppressive requirements: its demand for unity, totality, and sameness.

That Derrida's approach severely distorts the merits—and the history—of Western thought goes almost without saying. In the standard deconstructionist litany of incurably logocentric thinkers, Plato occupies the status of crown witness. But for anyone who has struggled with the ambivalences and the contradictions of dialogues such as the *Theaetetus* or *Parmenides*, Derrida's characterizations of Platonic thought are risible. Moreover, if language and knowledge are irremediably logocentric, and if understanding is merely a species of misunderstanding, then Derrida's standpoint deprives us of the means of our own liberation. Deconstruction cheerfully severs the pivotal link between insight and emancipation—a link that, from Socrates to Freud, has been central to all theories of human self-realization. When Socrates proclaimed, at the dawn of Western thought, that "virtue is knowledge," he gave voice to philosophy's central premise: that reason is the key to human flourishing, to a life well lived. By denigrating reason as "logocentric," Derrida willfully cultivates a new obscurantism. Anyone who has tried to plow through his infamously obscure texts knows exactly what this means. As one of deconstruction's French critics has aptly observed: "Deconstruction is the ruse that makes it possible to speak at the same time as there is nothing more to say."

Deconstruction certainly has had a strange career. At the precise moment when Derrideanism became a dead letter in France, it was resurrected in North America. Amid the "culture of narcissism" aptly diagnosed by Christopher Lasch (among others), deconstructionist feats of interpretive bravado—its involuted "close readings" of hermetic texts—found favor among a generation of graduate students that had taken to heart Derrida's celebrated maxim *il n'y a pas de hors-texte*, "there is nothing outside the text." So deconstruction provided a fitting alibi for those who were condemned to spend the majority of their waking hours chained to a study carrel in the library.

III.

Philosophy in a Time of Terror is a disappointing book. Since the interviews were conducted in fall 2001—prior to President Bush's "axis of evil" speech, not to mention the recent war in Iraq—it seems already a little out of date. At its core are the two dialogues, conducted by Borradori, with Habermas and Derrida, which are complemented by three substantial interpretive essays by Borradori herself. The Habermas colloquy, the book's unquestionable highlight, runs to a crisp twenty pages. The Derrida interview rambles on interminably for fifty-one pages. Lest I stand accused of misrepresenting Derrida's talents, here is his response to Borradori's relatively straightforward question: were the September 11 events historically unique?

> We perhaps have no concept and no meaning available to us to name ... this "thing" that has just happened, this supposed "event"... "Something" took place, we have the feeling of not having seen it coming, and certain consequences undeniably follow upon the "thing." But this very thing, the place and meaning of this "event," remains ineffable, like an intuition without concept, like a unicity with no generality on the horizon or with no horizon at all, out of range for a language that admits its powerlessness and so is reduced to pronouncing mechanically a date, repeating it endlessly, as a kind of ritual incantation, a conjuring poem, a journalistic litany or rhetorical refrain that admits to not knowing what it's talking about. We do not in fact know what we are saying or naming in this way: September 11, *le 11 septembre*, September 11 ... The telegram of this metonymy ... points out ... that we do not recognize or even cognize, that we do not yet know how to qualify, that we do not know what we are talking about.... What remains "infinite" in this wound is that we do not know how to describe, identify, or even name it.

This reminds me of the joke that made the academic rounds in the 1980s: "What is the difference between a deconstructionist and a Mafioso?" "The deconstructionist makes you an offer you can't understand."

Philosophy in a Time of Terror is disconcertingly littered with careless factual errors. Habermas lives in Starnberg, Germany, not in "Stamberg." Hannah Arendt's two most important books, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and *The Human Condition*, appeared in 1951 and 1958, not in 1958 and 1944. Max Horkheimer's essay "Traditional and Critical Theory" was published in 1937, not in 1930. And so on. There are serious errors of substance as well. Borradori claims, for example, that unlike Bertrand Russell, who believed that philosophy was concerned with timeless truths, Hannah Arendt held that "philosophy was always historically bound, so that any engagement with it carries a political import." But as anyone knows who is familiar with Arendt's posthumously published work, *The Life of the Mind*—where, in neo-Aristotelian fashion, she lionizes the *vita contemplativa*, or the virtues of thought divorced from practice—this view is wholly false.

But the biggest disappointment is that the much anticipated colloquy between Habermas and Derrida, the reigning titans of European philosophy, never materializes. *Philosophy in a Time of Terror* promotes itself (I quote from the jacket copy) as "an unprecedented encounter between two of the most influential thinkers of our age: here for the first time Habermas and Derrida overcome their historical antagonism and agree to appear side by side." But Habermas and Derrida were not even in the same room when the interviews were conducted. In fact, they were not even on the same continent. (Derrida was interviewed in New York in October; Habermas was interviewed upon his return to Germany in December). Instead of an historic "meeting of the minds," we are

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presented with a dialogue of the deaf. Borradori's repeated efforts to convince us that the two philosophers share a significant amount of common ground fall crushingly flat.

SINCE THE INTERVIEW TRANSPIRED a mere three months after the events of September 11, Habermas is understandably circumspect about hazarding portentous prophecies concerning their long-term historical meanings. At the same time, as a liberal internationalist with profound Kantian allegiances, he voices significant reservations about the nature of America's response. Habermas views the strengthening of international law and related organs of international and regional governance (the United Nations and the European Union) as the most reliable bulwark against predatory state behavior. Following decades of cynicism about the viability of international institutions—a cynicism abetted by the imperatives of Cold War–induced realpolitik—the 1990s witnessed a dramatic rebirth of the cosmopolitan spirit immortalized in Kant's treatise on "Perpetual Peace." Successful instances of humanitarian intervention in Bosnia and Kosovo, "crimes against humanity" trials in The Hague (the first since World War II), a nascent International Criminal Court, and the subjection of former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet to the exigencies of human rights law—all of these instances denote a transformed international consensus concerning the prospects of lawful cosmopolitan governance.

Habermas is understandably concerned that these inchoate strides toward internationalism may be jeopardized by a new round of intemperate superpower unilateralism. Typically, declarations of war entail limited goals and relatively well-defined objectives. And the humanitarian interventions of the 1990s sought the backing of the international community. But the Bush administration's open-ended "war on terrorism" falls outside these accepted parameters, thereby potentially engendering a new wave of international political instability. Foreign nationals detained at Guantanamo Bay have been deprived of the legal safeguards commonly accorded prisoners of war; and the military tribunals that Bush and his advisers plan on utilizing to try suspected terrorists represent another mechanism to circumvent customary guarantees of due process. If the world's only remaining superpower regularly runs roughshod over the strictures and the provisions of international humanitarian law, where is the incentive for nations that possess weaker historical commitments to liberal values to act lawfully? Habermas's commitment to sustaining the moral viability of international law parallels Rawls's attempt in *The Law of Peoples* to extend the precepts of "justice as fairness" that he developed in *A Theory of Justice* to relations among nations or peoples.

LAST SPRING HABERMAS PUBlished a widely-discussed manifesto (co-signed by Derrida) called "Our Renewal: After the War, Europe's Rebirth," which interpreted the massive anti-war demonstrations in Europe as the sign of an emergent common European consciousness. Habermas's hope is that a federal Europe, united behind a common foreign policy and committed to the values of liberal internationalism, will be able to serve as an effective counterweight to American unilateralism. In this document, written six weeks after the overthrow of Iraq's Ba'athist dictatorship, one detects a geopolitical stridency absent in the Borradori interview:

> In this world a reduction of politics to the obtuse as well as costly alternative between war and peace does not exhaust all the options. Europe must throw its weight on the scales, both on the international plane as well as in the framework of the United Nations, in order to counter-balance the hegemonic unilateralism of the United States. Europe must bring its influence to bear on the structural design of a future international legal-political order [*Weltinnenpolitik*]—at the World Economic Summits and the Institutions of the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund.

Yet, in view of the animosities and conflicts that have historically beset the European Union—the Nice summit on institutional reform broke down ignominiously, as did last month's efforts to promulgate a constitution; the smaller nations, a number of which supported the American campaign in Iraq, are justifiably apprehensive about being bullied in the domain of international affairs by France and Germany—one wonders whether these proposals have much of a chance to succeed. And how easy will it be to maintain a "common European consciousness" when there is no longer an American war to protest?

HABERMAS'S STEADFAST COSmopolitanism re-inforces the image of the pacifist-multilateralist European recently constructed by Robert Kagan in *Of Paradise and Power*. But it would be foolish, as well as potentially self-defeating, for statesmen and policymakers to discount the German philosopher's concerns for just international governance. Since the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, which brought the horrors of the Thirty Years' War to a merciful end, the reigning consensus in international relations has been an unyielding respect for state sovereignty, to the detriment of internationalism. The Westphalian settlement gave rise to the feast-or-famine approach of balance of power politics. It was a mechanism that enjoyed noteworthy successes, as in the relatively peaceful, one-hundred year interregnum that began with the Treaty of Vienna in 1815. But when the system broke down, as it did in 1914, the results were catastrophic. No statesman in his right mind should desire to go back down that road.

Another significant defect of the Westphalian system was that it tacitly sanctioned all manner of persecution occurring within state borders. Only with the implementation of the post-Holocaust, U.N.–backed human rights regime, making "crimes against humanity" an offense transcending the boundaries of state sovereignty, did the situation begin to change. Whatever the new regime's defects (most of which have pertained to a lack of capacity for enforcement), one would be hard-pressed to recommend a return to the earlier system.

And respecting the international system recommends itself on prudential grounds as well as on ethical ones. Morally speaking, such respect reinforces the ground rules of acceptable international conduct and thereby helps to curtail potential excesses on the part of rogue states and regional bullies, although no such system is flawless. Practically speaking, one of the inescapable facts of contemporary international relations is that

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no individual superpower can master the contingencies of an increasingly complex and unpredictable global political environment. Regional alliances are imperative, of course; but, in addition, international law provides a set of rule-governed procedures to regulate disputes that would prove too onerous to address on an ad hoc or case by case basis, thereby freeing up political energies for "hard cases" such as the current dispute involving North Korea's nuclear bluster.

IN ASSESSING THE MOTIVES BEHIND the American war on terrorism, Habermas disagrees sharply with cynics on the political left who perceive the Bush administration's bellicosity as an unambiguous instance of self-interested *Machtpolitik*, as a grab for world-mastery by an unrivaled world hegemony. Instead he understands the attitudes of the Republican administration as consistent with the values of liberal nationalism. He disagrees not so much with the administration's values—a principled aversion to tyrants such as Saddam Hussein and a desire to see democratic regimes flourish in their stead—as with its methods: a fervent unilateralism that he perceives as ultimately self-defeating. In Habermas's view, such policies represent a classic instance of illegitimate means vitiating desirable political ends. In "What Does the Felling of the Monument Mean?," a piece written last April in the wake of the Iraq war, he articulates these objections as follows:

> World society has become too complex for it still to be steerable from some central point based on a politics of military force. The fear of terrorism experienced by the technically highly-armed superpower seems to express the Cartesian fear of a subject seeking to turn itself and the world around it into an object, in order to bring everything under control.... A nation which reduces all options to the dumb alternatives of war and peace runs up against the limits of its own organizational powers and resources. Even if this hegemonic unilateralism were realizable it would still have side-effects that would, by its own criteria, be morally undesirable. The more that political power manifests itself in the dimensions of military, secret service, and police, the more does it undermine itself ... by endangering its own mission of improving the world according to liberal ideas.

Habermas's cosmopolitanism is, I think, too rigid. His rather pristine view of humanitarian intervention risks foundering on the question: how should one proceed in the event that multilateral institutions break down? One could argue that the German and French refusal to join the anti-Iraq coalition was less principled than the Anglo-American military intervention—which, after all, targeted for removal one of the twentieth century's most bloodthirsty and insidious tyrants. In September 2002, Gerhard Schroeder parlayed a brazen and thankless anti-Americanism into a semi-miraculous electoral triumph. Across the Rhine, Jacques Chirac took careful note of the domestic political gains to be won from playing the anti-American card. Since their first priority was the eminently "realist" goal of setting limits to American geopolitical reach, France and Germany were happy to let Saddam's brutal regime off the hook, thereby forsaking—or so one might argue—the precepts of humanitarian intervention that had been put to such outstanding use in Bosnia, Kosovo, and East Timor. Nor should one forget that in Kosovo, in order to forestall genocide, NATO was compelled to act in the absence of a Security Council resolution—to act unilaterally. On that occasion it was Russia that played an obstructionist role by threatening to block U.N. approval through use of its veto power. Sometimes liberal nationalism is the fallback position for a dysfunctional multilateralism.

As a champion of rule of law and liberal internationalism, Habermas harbors few illusions about the morally retrograde character of the fundamentalist worldview that inspired the September 11 attacks. An ethics of tolerance appropriate to an age of globalization requires the ability to assume the standpoint of the "other." But dogmatic belief systems of all varieties rule out precisely this capacity. Habermas views Islamic fundamentalism as a "response" to the challenges of modernity to the Arab world: "The West in its entirety serves as a scapegoat for the Arab world's own, very real experiences of loss, suffered by populations torn out of their cultural traditions during processes of accelerated modernization." Yet unlike partisans of the "blowback" idea, who allege that on September 11 the United States merely reaped the consequences of what its foreign policy had sown, Habermas's characterization confers no legitimacy on the phenomenon that it seeks to explain. His unflagging commitment to the "moral point of view" forbids him from entertaining any illusions that one could under any circumstances justify the cold-blooded massacre of civilian innocents (at least five hundred forty-eight of whom were foreign-born).

IV.

DERRIDA'S EXPLANATION FOR September 11 is decidedly more fanciful. It relies on the idiom of virology. In his view, the attacks are best described in terms of the biofeedback mechanisms of the human autoimmune system. (Yes, really.) He seems oblivious to the semantic hazards involved in trying to analyze human societies in terms of biological metaphors, which has traditionally been an essential feature of the discourse of European racism.

As is well known, the autoimmune system secretes antibodies to attack unwanted foreign invaders, such as microbes. But at times the process miscarries, and the antibodies mistakenly attack the host. According to Derrida, the September 11 attacks were born of an analogous process. As the epicenter of globalization and neo-colonialism, the West has become entangled in depredations and corrupt dealings well beyond its own borders. Moreover, it remains oblivious to the way the injustice and the rapacity that it has visited upon the helpless peoples of the world distort life in the northern hemisphere's affluent metropoles. When antibodies attack the host, they call attention to the fact that the host is diseased.

On September 11, the West at long last reaped what it had sown. According to Derrida, as a reaction to American foreign policy, the brand of Islamic fundamentalism practiced by Al Qaeda was a type of "antibody," a Western "secretion," an indigenous response to the imperiousness of American political overreach. Usually these "antibodies" thrive at the Third World sites where they are originally "secreted." But in the case at hand something went wrong. The West's usually reliable autoimmune system inexplicably miscarried, and the "antibody" known as Al Qaeda attacked its "host." The September 11 attacks thus

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serve as a cruel reminder of the inequities and injustices of American "hegemony." This is what the world-famous philosopher concludes:

> As we know, an autoimmunitary process is that strange behavior where a living being, in quasi-suicidal fashion, 'itself' works to destroy its own protection, to immunize itself against its 'own' immunity.... At issue is an autoimmunitary terror ... of the "Cold War," ... the formation of Arab Muslim terrorist networks equipped and trained during the Cold War.... What will never let itself be forgotten is thus the perverse effect of the autoimmunitary itself. For we now know that repression in both its psychoanalytical sense and its political sense—whether it be through the police, the military, or the economy—ends up producing, reproducing, and regenerating the very thing it seeks to disarm.

From an empirical standpoint—highly unglamorous, I know, and the bane of deconstruction—the "blowback" argument in Derrida's assertions is untenable. It grossly exaggerates American involvement in the anti-Soviet struggle in Afghanistan during the 1980s. To be sure, in 1986–1987 the CIA provided the Mujaheddin with nine hundred Stinger anti-aircraft missiles. But as Peter Bergen showed in *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden*, excessive American participation would have risked compromising the anti-Soviet guerrilla campaign as well as handing the Russians an immense propaganda coup. As Bergen concludes: "The CIA did not need the Afghan Arabs, and the Afghan Arabs did not need the CIA. The notion that the Agency funded and trained the Afghan Arabs is, at best, misleading." More importantly, Derrida's insinuations naïvely overlook the central "ethical" question: was not the goal of ending the Soviet Union's illegal occupation of Afghanistan a worthy one?

ONE OF THE UNWITTING MERITS of this book is that it demonstrates the basic incommensurability between Habermas's and Derrida's understanding of philosophy itself, despite the volume's avowed intention of "bridging the differences." Habermas remains fully committed to the central goals of normative political theory. He believes that the role of moral philosophy is to clarify the ethical presuppositions that underlie everyday social interaction. In this respect, he is a legitimate heir to the transcendental philosophy of Kant. In major philosophical works such as *Theory of Communicative Action*, he has defined the moral goal of human communication as "understanding oriented toward reaching an agreement." Transferred to the sphere of politics, this notion admirably mandates that one maximize the potentials of uninhibited discussion or public deliberation, thereby ensuring that political outcomes are fair or just. Unfortunately, in advanced post-industrial societies the constraints of "social complexity" play an increasingly dominant role, and pragmatic considerations place a premium on considerations of efficiency and the role of technical expertise—in the face of which the deliberative capacities of an informed lay citizenry seem increasingly irrelevant. Consequently, Habermas's political thought revolves around the question of the extent to which "lay publics" can reclaim a deliberative role that has been increasingly usurped by experts, bureaucrats, and special interests.

What separates Habermas from postmodernists such as Derrida is a basic confidence in the capacity of democratic government to arrive at just decisions. He believes that polities founded on rule of law contain an ineradicable element of principle that distinguishes them from regimes predicated on force or interest. Real politics represents a perennial balancing act between the norms of fairness, usually codified in a nation's constitution, and considerations of interest or expediency that derive from the imperatives of economic and administrative life. But postmodernists are unmoved by norms of political fairness. Force or interest is all there is. Undoubtedly, this is one of the reasons behind Derrida's recent fascination with Carl Schmitt. "Whoever says humanity lies": this means that whoever claims to act on the basis of principle only does so the more effectively to mask his interests. Derrida has said that there is no such thing as a "just law." It really doesn't get more cynical than that.

IT IS ON THESE ISSUES THAT BORradori's ill-judged efforts to reconcile the philosophies of Habermas and Derrida run aground. At one point she tries to seduce Habermas into accepting Derrida's awful view that norms of "tolerance" are little more than a pretext for Western paternalism. Following Derrida's lead, she suggests that, under the cover of "tolerance," we effectively assimilate non-Westerners to our own values and belief systems. But Habermas nicely settles this hash:

> Today, for example, we encounter this paradox in the concept of "militant democracy": no freedom for the enemies of freedom. However, from this example we can also learn that the straight deconstruction of the concept of tolerance falls into a trap, since the constitutional state contradicts precisely the premise from which the paternalistic sense of the traditional concept of "tolerance" derives. Within a democratic community whose citizens reciprocally grant one another equal rights, no room is left for an authority allowed to *one-sidedly* determine the boundaries of what is to be tolerated. On the basis of the citizens' equal rights and reciprocal respect for each other, nobody possesses the privilege of setting the boundaries of tolerance from the viewpoint of their own preferences and value-orientations.

Taboo Against the Word 'Beauty,' Elegiac Version

How can a halo of vigorous flies
indicate anything but renewal?
The truth—simply beautiful—
what's rotten, nothing more. Tonight
smudge pots repeat no recognizable
constellation. Even blemished fruit,
eaten in darkness, tastes lovely.
Such ripeness dousing the air.

In conclusion, we call that wind
once blown over a carcass ripe.
If a body can prove the soul exists
then flesh is narrative. The spirit, lyric.
Even blood drained serves a purpose.
Even shattered glass will glisten.

ALLEN BRADEN

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In other words: even if the principle of tolerance is imperiously misused in specific empirical instances, democratic norms contain a self-correcting mechanism that allows us to differentiate between a "fair-minded" and abusive implementation of basic egalitarian precepts. While others wallow in the sophistries of postmodernism, Habermas has remained an unwavering champion of democratic precepts and the "moral point of view." ■

Deborah Friedell
Disengagement

THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT
By Anita Brookner
(Random House, 273 pp., $23.95)

ANITA BROOKNER IS THE great chronicler of a particular sort of female loneliness. Her typical heroine spends most of her novel exhausted "with the tiredness of one who has too little rather than too much to do." Someone has left her money, and so she does not work, or she works at something mostly solitary, such as translating or archiving. Her few friends are scattered, and during her rare moments among them she usually feels uncomfortable and unworthy, "like a humble petitioner, seeking an hour of their time, in wine bars and restaurants near their place of work." She attempts to fill her days with long walks, baths, and novels. Then she drinks a tisane and goes early to bed.

Sometimes she keeps busy caring for an invalid relative; or, terrified of loneliness, she marries a man whom she does not love. But the invalid dies or the husband divorces, and she is left alone again. She times her outings to the grocery store ("buying the food I should be obliged to eat alone") so as to see children on their way to school. She stares at other women's babies whenever she encounters them on her walks through London. If she can manage it, she takes an old family friend as a lover, a married man who dotes on his wife and children but still keeps a secret flat. He grows tired of her. She tries again, with a man who is good but "dull, even subservient, a schoolmaster out of some improving nineteenth-century novel, one of those undervalued heroes despised even by the reader." (One Brookner novel appositely calls this character Rivers, after Charlotte Brontë's self-denying missionary.) And the heroine eventually realizes that there is perhaps nothing lonelier than being with the wrong person.

So she considers leaving London altogether, to make a new life for herself in Paris or the Riviera. And here the novels sunder. In some of them the heroine is too depressed to muster the effort to leave. Sometimes she discovers that travel does indeed avoid despair, that she is free to make a new life, and so the novel ends hopefully. Other times she arrives in France still trapped beneath the bell jar, stifling in her own juices. But the cause of her suffering is always the same: her misguided belief that the meek will inherit the earth, that good behavior will always be rewarded by good fortune. And so, in Brookner's novel *Falling Slowly*, Beatrice suffers because she "had sought to ally herself with the heroines of novels rather than with the practical business of finding a partner, still preferred stories in which a long ordeal is crowned with a happy outcome." In *The Bay of Angels*, Zoë suffers because "I accepted as part of nature's plan that after a lifetime of sweeping the kitchen floor I would go to the ball, that the slipper would fit, and that I would marry the prince." In Brookner's new novel, her twenty-second, Elizabeth Wetherall "comes back to nineteenth-century novels again and again, largely because of the sheer beauty of the reasoning: happiness at last, achieved through the exercise of faithfulness and right thinking." The poor girl is doomed, of course. If only she had read Brookner instead.

In *Fraud*, Brookner's omniscient narrator declares that the heroine, Anna Durrant, is "eternally unprepared for the rules of engagement between the sexes in the least predictable and sentimental of games." Now, in *The Rules of Engagement*, Elizabeth is no more prepared. The problem, she feels, is generational. Born in 1948, she finds herself "too old for the Fifties, too young for the Sixties." The rule book that she inherited from her mother is obsolete: "all around me women were having adventures, taking lovers, running corporations." She is repulsed by them as much as she is jealous.

Elizabeth narrates the story of her own life, as well as that of her childhood friend Betsy, with the novel structured around descriptions of their encounters with each other throughout their lives. Brookner has concerned most of her novels with the plights of similar pairs, women (and, in a few cases, not-quite-realized men) who have only a single bond in common. Usually they are sisters, or their husbands are business partners, or as is the case with this novel, they were thrown together when they started school on the same day, and are conscious of being alter egos since, as in Brookner's novel *Latecomers*, they share the same first name. In keeping with most of Brookner's other novels, one of the women is colder and sharper than the other, who seems possessed only of soft sympathy. While Elizabeth is serious, Betsy is "lighthearted, skimming the surface, responding always with a smile." Early orphaned, Betsy suffers from the widespread affliction in Brookner's fiction of craving a lover less than she does a family, "someone else's if necessary, where she would have various roles and would do her best to perfect them." There is something true about such a character; she is certainly more prevalent in real life than she has been in fiction, and one understands why Brookner returns to her again and again.

As a child, Elizabeth is both envious of Betsy's innocence and protective of it, as "one respects those qualities one does not possess oneself." Rather than tell Betsy of her parents' marital difficulties, Elizabeth persists in allowing her friend to idolize her family life, ominously telling us "had I known what was to follow I think I should have behaved differently." The girls temporarily part after secondary school—Betsy to university, Elizabeth to a sojourn in Paris and then marriage to a widower twenty-seven years her senior, whose gentleness she appreciates in hopes that her marriage will be less acrimonious than her parents'. (As for sexual attraction, Elizabeth only "hazily acknowledged the fact that I would not object to his love-making.") The differ-

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ence in their ages all but ensures that Elizabeth will not be coupled forever.

While Elizabeth spends her time in Paris with only her landlady for occasional company, walking the streets from one end of the city to the other, dining and watching movies alone, Betsy finds a family of sorts in a group of bohemians, returning permanently to London only with the death of her lover. Betsy holds little interest for Brookner, because she does what young people are supposed to do in Paris; her goings-on are related only in quick summaries. It is Elizabeth's lonely walks that hold the novel's attention, her awareness "of myself, a spectator, sitting in the audience, while outside the sun shone down on a Paris I had never known." Back in London, we return to the Brookner plots of old—the taking of the lover with a flat, the death of the husband, the new lover who is "rather like one of those upright heroes in my favorite nineteenth-century novels." And then the excruciating loneliness, the days filled only with novels and tea, long baths and early bedtimes, the moment when Elizabeth must decide whether she will leave London and go to the south of France, the frustration that "the fragmentation of present-day society had meant a loss of hope, so that those who harbored traditional leanings were largely disappointed," the realization that "even books can let you down."

THERE ARE GREAT WRITERS who seem to fill novel after novel with the same characters under different names. The most distinguished of this company is Henry James, with his troupe of New World innocents and polymathic piano-playing seducers. Yet there is never a doubt in James's later novels that we are observing an artist constantly in the process of re-configuring his old characters, having them sort out new moral problems. This used to be the case with Brookner: however superficially her plots resembled each other, subtle differences between them would lead her to ask new questions of her characters, and she would come to new conclusions. She could take a neckline from one book, a bodice and a skirt from another, and make a work that both was new and seemed new.

But in *The Rules of Engagement* Brookner knows her characters' plights so well that the novel seems to lack any sensation of urgency. The prose is confident, at times elegant, but too often it feels rigged, and exasperatingly fatalistic. Elizabeth is never allowed to be an unreliable narrator; she is, on the contrary, relentlessly reliable, perfectly analyzing her situations before too briefly describing them. So she tells us (in language that betrays Brookner's academic origins) that she is "dominated by the pathetic fallacy; the declining year mirrored my situation." This is introduced by a quick description of winter, followed by a few lines on depression, and then we are off to the next revelation. When Elizabeth learns that Betsy is probably involved with her ex-lover, Elizabeth declares that she "feels a sadness which had nothing to do with jealousy but was both more intimate and more universal." She is less a character in the novel than an exegete of the novel. The effect is that the narrative seems almost bored by its own heroine, as though her experiences are less interesting than what can be said about them.

Brookner has devoured James, and she drops what she has learned from him wholesale into her books. She is overly fond of mimicking his qualifying phrases ("I liked to know, or to think I knew"; "I could see, or thought I could see"), although in this novel she finally seems to have stopped over-using the terms "mésalliance" and "hang fire." But her characters still come to Jamesian revelations without fully earning them. Their "recognitions" and "renunciations" arrive so quickly, so inexorably, that they can seem bathetic. Moral truths are thrown into characters' mouths even when such truths are in conflict with what else they seem to know, or think they know.

And so Elizabeth, in the best Jamesian tradition, declares herself to the reader as opposed to cloistered virtue: "Being good has no virtue if it is grounded in ignorance," she incants. But it becomes important in the novel that Elizabeth's generous husband, Digby, be considered "good," and that Elizabeth's late comprehension of his goodness leads her to re-consider her life. "I had learned about goodness from him," Elizabeth says of Digby. "And that, I hoped, would be his legacy to me." Indeed, for the rest of the novel we hear much about Digby's "goodness," and are forced to take it as a given; but he is also consistently characterized as a man who "cited routine as a principle," who is of "settled habits" and "obeyed the rules" only because his "attitudes and affections were uncomplicated." Digby's "goodness," his seemingly unquestioning obeisance of norms, does not at all square with the heroine's explicit conception of virtue, but neither she nor the novel seems to recognize the disjuncture. The sentence "being good has no virtue if it is grounded in ignorance" becomes only an undigested bromide.

BROOKNER FREQUENTLY SUGgests a parallel between her heroines and James's Strether, the man of the imagination who convinces us by the end of *The Ambassadors* that he has lived more than all the seemingly more active people around him because he has thought more. Strether's famous exhortation to little Bilham to "live all you can; it's a mistake not to" becomes, in the mouth of the heroine in *Falling Slowly*, "live while you can. It will all be taken away when you least expect it. You too, young lady, make the most of your life." In *The Rules of Engagement*, there is something more than a little Strether-like about Elizabeth's Parisian experiences, and like all of Brookner's heroines she seems created in the image of the man who feels "tired ... without having a great deal to show for it; disenchanted without having known any great enchantments." We are guided to feel that Elizabeth should find solace similar to Strether's in her life's choices. She tells us that she is

> ruminative, attentive to change, to those alterations in the light, to tiny inconsequential happenings and accidents: that dead pigeon, a mess of dirty feathers, lying in the gutter, the warmer wind, a familiar shop being refurbished by its owner, the smell of coffee from the open door of a café. I often wished that I could do something with these impressions, that I were a writer of some sort....

It is an odd passage, because otherwise the novel never concerns itself with Elizabeth's "impressions"—only with her pronouncements. While Elizabeth may tell us that she is ruminative, the novel that she tells in spite of herself does not ruminate enough. And while Brookner may be right to spare us the dead pigeon, one wishes for a novel that were more attentive to change and alterations, to tiny inconsequential happenings and accidents. Instead, *The Rules of Engagement* knows too well where it is going to stop along the way. It does not live all it can. ■

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PYONGYANG DIARIST

Fantasia

EVEN IN NORTH KOREA, BOYS and girls fall in love. On a cool autumn afternoon in Pyongyang, I watched as a young soldier, looking sharp in his dress uniform, took his new bride to receive a blessing for their union from a 40-ton bronze statue of Kim Il Sung. The statue stands on Pyongyang's Mansu Hill, and it receives thousands of visitors each day. Like everyone else in the country, the bride and groom wore pins celebrating the late Kim. They laughed nervously when asked to pose for photos with foreigners, but they agreed, looking curious and distrustful at the same time. It was the first time they'd ever seen Westerners.

I GOT A RARE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT the North in October—and even travel outside Pyongyang—because of the world's most popular game. I played for Beijing Celtic, a soccer team comprising expatriates based in China. This fall, we were the first amateur team of Westerners ever invited to play in North Korea. The soccer tour was inspired by the film *The Game of Their Lives*, a documentary about North Korea's 1966 World Cup team, which reached the quarter-finals of the tournament in one of the greatest shocks in soccer history, creating lasting bonds between some North Korean and European players. Beijing Celtic saw the film and decided that, if sport had once helped bridge the gap between this reclusive nation and the world, it could do so again. Surprisingly, Pyongyang agreed. So the trip gave us a rare opportunity to interact relatively freely with North Koreans. And, once there, we saw that, amid lunacy, shreds of ordinary life survive in the North.

OUR VISIT BEGAN IN OCTOBER, A TIME of heightened tensions between North Korea and the West. Until the day of departure, we expected the matches to be canceled. But, in the end, amateur sport triumphed, and we got our visas. We shared the aircraft to Pyongyang with surprise traveling companions: the Iranian national soccer team, who were also playing a match against the North. Chatting on the plane, we schmoozed our way into an invitation to what a White House speechwriter might have dubbed the "Axis of Evil Bowl."

THE EXTENT OF NORTH KOREA'S ISOLATION was immediately evident in Pyongyang. At airport arrivals, we were stripped of anything that could be used to communicate with the outside world. No mobile phones. No video cameras. No radios. Our bags were searched, and we were frisked by no-nonsense police officers. Even the semi-celebrity Iranians had their mobile phones confiscated. (Angered, perhaps, they drubbed the North 3–1 two days later.) And, despite reports that information is starting to trickle into the North, there was little evidence that people are aware of the world. The local media is propaganda: The lead story in *The Pyongyang Times* noted, "Kim Jong Il provides on-the-spot guidance to agriculture." There aren't many newsstands. Bookstores are rare. When I asked one educated North Korean how many countries there were in the world outside the Korean Peninsula, he replied that there were seven at most.

BUT, DESPITE THE ISOLATION, EVERYDAY life persists—through the looking glass. North Korea has begun to liberalize its economy, and the north side of the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), which we visited, now even has its own gift shop, which peddles North Korean flags, pins, and books. Though Pyongyang and Washington trade barbs, in my hotel lobby I spotted a group of Western men. With their short hair and ramrod straight posture, they were obviously soldiers, and their drawls gave them away as Americans. Some two-dozen American specialists, based in Hawaii, were in North Korea searching for the remains of American servicemen killed during the Korean War. The missions operate quietly, with the U.S. side paying a reported $2.1 million in fees to the North Koreans for access to battle sites. Later in our trip, as the Americans' most recent search mission was winding up, I saw American soldiers and their North Korean army escorts in the hotel bar drinking to each other's health late into the night and singing Korean folk songs. Neither side seemed worried that, if relations between their nations deteriorated, the next time these drinking buddies meet they might be trying to kill each other.

OUTSIDE THE HOTEL, THE NORTH WAS having trouble keeping the lights on. Power cuts were frequent, signs of years of economic mismanagement. Yet Pyongyang's almost three million citizens shivered in dark apartment buildings and made do with infrequent power supplies. Meanwhile, the 558-foot-tall Juche Tower, an imposing monument to Kim Il Sung's philosophy of self-reliance, shone brightly, illuminated by energy-sucking floodlights. One other place kept the lights on as well: the tacky massage parlor/brothel/nightclub/casino in the basement of our hotel, which appeared to have its own generators and managed to stay open during blackouts. Off-limits to most North Koreans and run by the Chinese, this den of iniquity generates desperately needed hard currency.

THE LACK OF POWER DIDN'T HURT THE North Koreans' soccer training. At the DMZ, I chatted with a North Korean army colonel, who calmly explained to me that the United States had started the Korean War with a sneak attack on the North. Upon learning we were a soccer club, the colonel chuckled, saying we were all "old and fat" and would probably lose 10–0. He was right. We had naïvely agreed prior to leaving Beijing that we would not win the game, since we didn't want to embarrass our hosts. But we had been deluding ourselves. The North Koreans were quicker, tougher, and far more skilled than us, just as the colonel had predicted. They were the ones taking it easy on us. While a crowd of North Korean spectators laughed at us, we were shut out 2–0.

ON ONE OF OUR LAST DAYS IN PYONGyang, we saw one more sign that times might be changing. A large construction project was underway, and, when I asked a worker what he was building, he told me it was going to be "something called a 'market.'" Though he wasn't too clear on exactly what a market was, that market opened three months ago and is doing a booming business selling everything from vegetables to imported whiskey.

DOUG NAIRNE

Doug Nairne is a Hong Kong–based writer.

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Education in Urban America

Chester E. Finn Jr. is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution; chairman of Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education; and president of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

There was good news, bad news, and troubling nonsense associated with the December 17, 2003, release of scores for ten big cities in fourth- and eighth-grade reading and math on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

The good news is that major urban school systems are willingly participating in NAEP, allowing their results to be held up for public inspection, and submitting to comparisons that can be harsh as well as revealing.

The bad news is that most students in these cities' systems performed dismally. In fourth-grade math, in only three of the ten jurisdictions did the percentage of kids scoring in NAEP's "proficient" range rise above the teens—and in just one did it beat the national average. In eighth-grade reading, at least two-fifths of the students were "below basic" in seven cities. In the six lowest-scoring cities, the percentages of reading-proficient eighth graders were grim: Chicago 15 percent, Houston 14 percent, Atlanta 11 percent, Los Angeles 11 percent, District of Columbia 10 percent, Cleveland 10 percent.

This shows that **Washington's ambitious goal of getting every young American to the "proficient" level is akin to crossing the Grand Canyon**, calling for heroic action on many fronts. Why, then, is the chairman of NAEP's governing board saying something different? An architect of the vaunted Texas education reforms, Darvin M. Winick is known for his reformist zeal. But not this time.

First he asserted that "the perception that students in urban schools do less well than others and have poor academic performance is not supported by the 2003 NAEP results." This is simply wrong. Their academic performance, by and large, is horrendous. And with rare exceptions, they do notably worse than the national average. Why encourage complacency in big-city school districts just when they need to struggle harder with painful reforms?

Winick turned next to the presentation of test results by race, noting (correctly) that minority youngsters "meet or exceed national averages" for students of the same race in some cities. OK, it's good to know that urban kids do no worse than same-race children elsewhere. But then he made this regrettable assertion: "When demographics and family economics are considered, students in the participating urban districts, on the average, are not too different from other students across the nation. The common perception that students in urban public schools do not achieve is not supported by the NAEP results."

The fact is that huge numbers of urban (and nonurban) youngsters in America are *not* achieving anywhere near satisfactorily—and that should be the main message. Moreover, at a time when our premier education goal is to close race-related achievement gaps, it is bizarre to settle for academic outcomes adjusted for "demographics and family economics." Such statements imply that poor and minority kids ought not be expected to attain proficiency and that we should be content if those in our big cities do as well (that is, as poorly) as similar kids elsewhere in the land.

Troubling nonsense, indeed.

— Chester E. Finn Jr.

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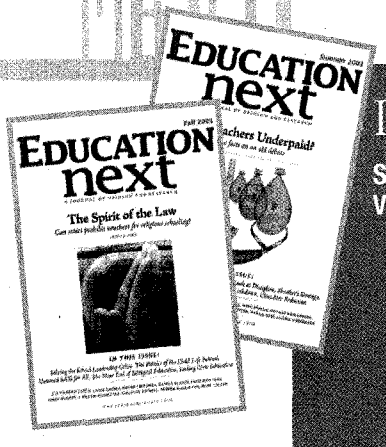

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